

The Sense of Reading Two Things at the Same Time:

Narrative, Visual and Intertextual Space in Virginia Woolf's

To the Lighthouse

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Summary

This is an attempt at a spatial reading of Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse*. The methods of approach to the novel are through narratology and intertextuality. By using narratological concepts from Gérard Genette, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Jakob Lothe and Morten Nøjgaard the spatial structure of the novel will be revealed. The narratological tendency towards favouring the analysis of the succession of narrative events, that is, narrative time, will be challenged by the attempt at applying narratological concepts to narrative space. Key concepts are *focalization*, *internal* and *external space*, *structural key elements*, and the notion of an *imaginary world*.

The intertextual function will be explored through attention to the *structural intersections* between texts, and the idea of the *ambivalent word*. The intertextual method of approach to the text of *TL* will reveal connections to other texts, both on the level of the word, and on the level of literary structure. The other texts that will be considered for their textual interlacing with *TL* are Woolf's novels *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Waves*, in addition to poems by Keats and Tennyson.

This reading will cover: Spatial concerns in relation to the overall structure of the novels and the contrasts between the three different parts; the nature of the space which the novel constructs; how characterization can become a spatial matter; the position of the narrator, and the contrast of narrative *mood* and *voice*; the placement of objects and their importance as structural elements; considerations of how a regular object becomes an art object; and last the significance of Romantic structure in *TL*.

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Abbreviations

The abbreviations of the names of Woolf's works that are used in this text are as follows:

<i>D (2 & 3)</i>	<i>Diary of Virginia Woolf</i>
<i>EJ</i>	<i>Early Journals</i>
<i>L</i>	"The Lighthouse"
<i>MD</i>	<i>Mrs Dalloway</i>
<i>ND</i>	<i>Night and Day</i>
<i>ROO</i>	<i>A Room of One's Own</i>
<i>TL</i>	<i>To the Lighthouse</i>
<i>TP</i>	"Time Passes"
<i>TW</i>	"The Window"
<i>VO</i>	<i>The Voyage Out</i>
<i>W</i>	<i>The Waves</i>

Chapter One: Introduction

Consider Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse* as a linear text that runs from the title printed on the front cover to the last word on the last page. Not taking into account incidental prefaces or introductions, the first spatial elements to turn up in the text are the lighthouse which figures in the title, and the window which figures in the first intertitle ("The Window"). These objects, the window and the lighthouse, initiate the creation of the novel's visual space; they are the primary objects in the construction of the text's *world of things*. These two titles give the reader the first clue as to what is the spatial material of the novel: the movement from the window to the lighthouse. The external story space which later is filled with the many visual and textual panoramas, expands between them.

The concept of space is receiving an increasing amount of attention in critical theory. One could say that theory took a turn at linguistics and is now headed toward space. The Danish critic Frederik Tygstrup writes that literary theory from the very outset has favoured time and the organization of events in a temporal sequence over spatial organization. He writes that the very notion of literary composition is based on succession rather than placement in space (165).¹ However, he, and several other critics, have turned to the examination of the narrative production of space. As far back as 1945 Joseph Frank established the importance of space in modern novels with the essay "Spatial Form in Modern Literature". Yet when Tygstrup writes about the predominance of literary time in the year 2000, he still seems to experience that the concept of space has not been given enough attention. Since then the significance of spatiality in literature has gradually been given more and more space in the field of critical theory. This focus on literary space brings about new issues to be addressed, not only when studying new literature, but also in the analysis of the old. The investigation of space is no longer an investigation of scenery in the background of temporally organized events, but the investigation of a participant in the production of literary meaning, comparable to any investigation of narrative succession.

Literary space comes into being not as a background for a story that can exist detached from it, but as an integrated part of the story which participates in the production of meaning.

¹ "Litteraturteorien har gerne lagt mere vægt på litteraturens tid end på litteraturens rum. ... Den intense fokusering på den narrative forms struktur, logik og dynamik har betydet, at spørgsmålet om litterær komposition først og fremmest er blevet betragtet som et spørgsmål om *succession*, om de fremstillede begivenheders efter-hinanden i tid, snarere end et spørgsmål om *situation*, begivenhedernes placering i et rum og sammenhæng med dette rum." (165)

In *To the Lighthouse* the window and the lighthouse are easily understood as symbols that denote a certain meaning; their meaning tends to be replaced by various symbolic meanings. However, the objects may also be read as spatial elements that structure the novel's *imaginary world* (or space), and this structuring is significant in its own right. Another theoretician of space, Russell West-Pavlov, writes: "Far from being a neutral void in which objects are placed and events happen, space/ing becomes a medium with its own consistency and, above all, its own productive agency" (17). The objects have significance as spatial elements that structure the visual panoramas that are painted throughout the narrative, and this structuring function produces meaning. The window is not merely a window placed in the background of events that take place solely through the interactions of literary characters; its placement in the story gives meaning to the characters' actions, thoughts and feelings in a way that would not be possible without its presence in the narrative. The window, the lighthouse, and several other objects, to which I will return later, contribute to the production of meaning simply by their placement.

There have been written numerous pages on Virginia Woolf's fiction. Every page from the very first of *The Voyage Out* to the very last of *Between the Acts* must have generated countless volumes of scrutinizing scholarship. Within these volumes there is likely an equally countless amount of approaches to the works. The spatial approach, however, does not seem to constitute an especially large part of the totality of volumes. Joseph Frank writes that "Modern literature, as exemplified by such writers as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce, is moving in the direction of spatial form ... All these writers ideally intend the reader to apprehend their work spatially, in a moment of time, rather than as a sequence" (10).² I hope to show that Woolf's name could easily be added to this list of authors, and that the construction of space in *TL* contributes to the way in which meaning is formed within the novel.

I will apply two perspectives in the analysis of spatiality in *TL*. Though space in literature may have been given an increasing amount of attention recently, this attention has perhaps been of the abstract kind. The exploration of construction of literary space as a narrative technique does not seem to be a customary method. Therefore my first approach to the analysis of space in *TL* will be in the terms of narratology. Narrative theory's contribution to the analysis of space is limited; the concepts in use seem to revolve primarily around

² Quotes with omitted words will be marked with three periods throughout. Brackets mark added words or letters. The exceptions are quotes from "Time Passes" that include bracketed sentences. These will be identified successively.

temporal structure, character relations and narrative voice. Nevertheless, there are some concepts which, when removed from their common usage and applied in a perhaps unconventional way, enable a narratological approach to literary space. Secondly, my analysis will use the concept of intertextuality. Though intertextual thinking traditionally adheres to the text, it is also possible to think of it in terms of spatiality, and textual space. The intertextual function links together texts that are spatial as well as textual. The remains of Chapter One will explore the premises for developing a spatial reading of *TL*. I will introduce the basic visual structure of the novel, and discuss the concepts that I later will use in my analysis of the novel. Chapter Two is principally devoted to narrative space and the visual qualities produces by the text. The dominating perspective will therefor be the narratological one. Chapter Three will first and foremost explore the intertextual relations in *TL*. However, the two perspectives cannot always be distinguished from one another, and I do ask that the reader always strives to keep in mind ‘the two things at the same time’.

To the Lighthouse: A Field of Spatial Investigation

Though not all of Woolf’s novels investigate the nature of literary space, experiments with spatial structure certainly plays a key role in *To the Lighthouse*. The novel consists of three parts, each named after the motif around which the narrative is structured: “The Window”, “Time Passes” and “The Lighthouse”. The first part, “The Window”, is characterized by several narrative returns to the drawing-room window of a summer house. This window becomes a point of departure for descriptions of the various characters’ thoughts. The characters are the Ramsay family and their friends, all staying at the Ramsays’ summer house in the Hebrides. The entire story line of TW takes place during the course of one late summer evening. Mr Ramsay, a renowned philosopher, spends his evening walking on the terrace mulling over his career. Through the window he has a view of his wife, Mrs Ramsay, and his son James. This view instigates a line of thought which deals with several issues that allow for the presentation of problems essential to the Mr Ramsay character. Similarly, Lily Briscoe, a family friend, has the same view of the mother and child through the window, and attempts to paint their portrait. Her inner artistic struggle to complete the painting becomes a major part of the text in TW.

The last part of the novel, “The Lighthouse”, is similarly centred on an object, the lighthouse, but is still mainly made up of characters’ thoughts and feelings, their inner space.

The period of time that it covers is less than a day. The middle part, "Time Passes", on the other hand, differs in structure as the narrative in this part primarily is made up of the description of time taking its toll on the summer house. TP stands in contrast to the remaining sections by its considerable acceleration in pace; while events in the first and last part of the novel take place within the duration of half a day, the events described in the middle section span over several years. This time period includes momentous changes, political as well as personal and social, causing significant alterations to the lives of the characters. Mrs Ramsay dies unexpectedly, and Mr Ramsay is inconsolable. Their son Andrew is killed in the First World War, while their daughter Prue marries and dies in labour. Still, it is the description of the decaying summer house that makes up the better part of this section, not the events from the characters' lives or the historical turmoil in the wake of World War One. Though these events create major alterations in the characters' lives, the consequences do not surface until the last part of the novel, "The Lighthouse". In TP they only occur as occasional bracketed interpolations to the descriptions of the decaying house.

Though the lighthouse as motif figures in all three parts of the novel, it is in the part that bears its name, when the actual journey towards it occurs, that it becomes an object which is given a position in close vicinity of the characters. In TW the lighthouse occurs as negation, i.e. the fact that the characters will *not* go there the following day functions as the main account of it. The lighthouse in L, however, is a positive, as the narrative is structured around the journey towards it. As the characters in TW are all situated in and around the summer house, the lighthouse is always viewed with a certain distance. In L the fact that several of the characters reach the lighthouse, results in an overall shift of perspective, as the view of the summer house in the distance becomes the dominant one. This view also becomes a metaphorical view of the past. Mr Ramsay looks back at the house and has a vision of himself walking on the terrace, similar, or the same, as has been described in TW: "He had found the house and so seeing it, he had also seen himself there; he had seen himself walking on the terrace, alone. He was walking up and down between the urns; and he seemed to himself very old, and bowed" (137). His son James also remembers the scene by the drawing-room window, though his memory is marked by it being a child's memory. He cannot recall entirely, and he only remembers a vague feeling and a vision of his mother: "There was a flash of blue, he remembered, and then somebody sitting with him laughed, surrendered, and he was very angry. It must have been his mother, he thought, sitting on a low chair, with his father standing over her" (139). A shift in spatial perspective becomes a narrative technique

by which Woolf conveys the passing of time. The events that Mr R and James are remembering are events that are part of the story in the first part of the novel. When they reoccur in the last part, they both see the events from afar; they are both situated in a boat nearing the lighthouse and they look back at the summer house and have some sort of vision of themselves there. The temporal distance to the events has become a spatial one, and the journey to the lighthouse has become a metaphorical view of the past.

So, then, just by a glance at the three intertitles, and the parts of the novel they denominate, several additional fields of inquiry regarding spatiality come up. First, the ever present duality space/time has been evoked through the contrasts in pace which figure in the three different parts. The pace in TW and L is very slow, covering only about half a day. The pace in TP however, accelerates considerably and covers ten years. The way this time passes is by intimate attention to space. It is the description of the summer house, and the landscape around it, that shows us the passing of time. Second, the notions of internal and external space are brought to our attention through the formal distinctions of the different parts. The first and last intertitles denote objects, a window and a lighthouse, and are the first contribution to the creation of narrative space; the nouns are accompanied by a definite article, which may indicate that they are specific objects that exist in the narrative world. The middle intertitle, however, includes a verb in the present tense, indicating continuous movement: *Time Passes*. This difference between noun and verb finds a continuation in the content of the three different parts. The temporal events covered in the short period of time which makes up TW and L, are naturally limited, and is accompanied by an expansion of narrative space. As the temporal literary events are limited, the areas the narrative covers expand into the minds and memories of the characters, whose thoughts also become spatial elements; the intertitles that designate objects also designate parts of the novel that question the status of the object by experimenting with internal and external space. In relation to the narrator these two intertitles have a confirming function as to the degree of perceptibility she³ has in the narrative; the titles are in a sense anonymous, they do not seem to be the enunciation of any narrating subject, only objects and happenings relating to the narrative.⁴ Owing to all the issues that arise when

³ I will refer to the narrative voice as inconsistently as possible. I will use both “he”, “she” and “it” when referring to it.

⁴ Gérard Genette poses the question of who the enunciator of the intertitles is (*Para* 301). In a third person narrative it would be the author (or the implied author). However, when not conceptualizing in terms of narrative voices, but in terms of narrative space and focal points, the titles denoting objects seem a part of the novel’s world of things. In *To the Lighthouse* specifically, the object orientation of the titles makes them a part of narrative space as well as being external to it, as the enunciation of an author. “Time Passes”, on the other hand,

taking a spatial approach to *TL*, the investigation of literary space seems to be a timely method.

Narrative Space

In Chapter Two I will spend considerable time (or space) developing a reading of *TL* based on narrative space. I will try to follow up some of the questions brought to light by the application of spatial theory to the novel. But such a reading requires a preliminary discussion of concepts that can be applied to this field of investigation. Within the area of narrative theory, varying concepts have been developed for analysing the facets of narrative texts. But, as each scholar has his or her distinct view of what is essential when it comes to exploring narrative texts, it is difficult to find one single theorist who includes every aspect of the novel which I wish to investigate. Therefore it has been a matter of picking and choosing concepts that can shed some light on the subjects I wish to explore. It is seldom the case that these scholars contradict each other; their concepts rather nuance and complement each other. The narratological concepts I have made use of are borrowed from Jakob Lothe, Slomith Rimmon-Kenan, Morten Nøjgaard⁵ and Gérard Genette.

Though critical theory has taken a spatial turn, and this turn may have resulted in an increasing amount of theories on literary space, these theories seldom take the shape of narrative theory. Though high-flying theories of literary space may say a lot about the theoretical (and perhaps philosophical) basis for constitution of literary space, they say little specifically on the analysis of novelistic narrative. However, narratological concepts that can be applied in spatial analysis do exist, though it may not be common to use the most radical understanding of the concepts when analysing narrative texts. Similarly to Frederik Tygstrup, Jakob Lothe claims that the question of narrative space has been given far less theoretical treatment than the notion of narrative time. Though for instance Genette's treatment of focalization, internal and external, to which I will return later, may have given nuances to what can take place within a narrative space, these concepts do not necessarily clarify the concept of narrative space as such. Perhaps the dallying is due to the fact that the reader's imagination seems to be necessarily implicated in the notion of narrative space. A novel, such as *TL*, undoubtedly has certain spatial or visual elements that can be regarded as objective in

seems to entail a focal point beyond the narrative space, as it assumes a panspatial and panchronic view of the story.

⁵ All translations of quotations from Morten Nøjgaard and Frederik Tygstrup are my own.

the sense that they are not dependent on the reader's imagination; there is no doubt that there is a lighthouse or a window present in the text. However, the visual fashioning of these elements, i.e. the image that is created by the word 'lighthouse' or 'window', is always in some sense dependent on the reader's imagination. This subjectivity seems to pose a problem for the objective aspirations of narrative theory.

What, then, is narrative space? According to Lothe the narrative space of for instance a novel is "the fictional universe the text presents through its narrative discourse" (49). Space can be as elementary as the places that are mentioned or described through the text, or in other words, the landscapes or rooms in which the story takes place. However, narrative space also has a metaphorical side to it; the *inner space* of characters is also a form of narrative space. So in addition to the *real* external spaces the story takes place in, there may be a more abstract form of space present in a text as well. Lothe distinguishes between two main types of narrative space: *story space* and *discourse space*. The story space is the real space and perhaps the physical space described in a text, or as Lothe puts it: "the space containing events, characters, and the place or places of the action as it is presented and developed in the discourse (i. e. as plot)" (50). Story space is the visual elements and phenomena that surround the characters. The discourse space is not as easily defined. By Lothe it is described as the space of the narrator, and may entail not only the space in which the characters are placed, and where the plot unfolds, but also a constructed space beyond this that only the narrator can access.

Though the concepts of discourse space and story space are useful, they create some problems when applied to a spatially complex novel like *TL*. Are the characters' inner spaces parts of the story space or the discourse space? This seems to be a matter of definition. While the inner space of a character could belong to the story space, if this character was also the narrator, the inner space of the characters in a novel must be part of the discourse space, if the narrator is omniscient, because the inner space of characters is not a visual property when viewed from the outside. I have chosen to call the visual setting on the level of the story, the story space, or external space. While the characters' inner space, i.e. everything that this must entail such as memories, thoughts and dreams, I regard as discourse space. Though I find this distinction between discourse space and story space very useful, it is the notion of internal and external space that I will use most frequently, as these relate directly to the characters without taking a detour through the narrator.

Morten Nøjgaard gives a more detailed description of narrative space than Lothe: “The narrative universe obviously consists of all the objects that can be perceived. They constitute what one might call the narrative text’s world of things” (194).⁶ Characters can also be spatial objects, especially if it is only descriptions of their exterior which appear in the narrative. Spatial objects can be flat or round, similarly to characters being flat or round. They may be given a very detailed and nuanced description, or they may be referred to merely by one word.

Nøjgaard sorts the analysis of a narrative’s world of things, or *poetic cosmos*, into two main categories: The reader can analyse the world of things by trying to locate the ontological categories that it is based on, or, he can assume that every text already is based on a set of more or less intuitive ontological categories, and go on to analyse the *textual surface*, that is, the way spatial objects and elements in a text build a world of things. It is the latter I wish to make use of.⁷ Space regarded as a textual surface, and with the objects placed within this space, is dealt with through a series of different concepts. First of all, the notion of *sign density*: A narrative space can be filled with objects, or there can be very few of them, and their placement in the text can be very close to each other, or far apart. The density of a text’s spatial objects, or elements, defines the nature of the narrative and poetic world. A narrative space densely populated with objects, and the description of these objects, creates a plasma-like or organic world, where everything is connected and seems to make up a whole. A sparsely populated narrative space creates a fragmented or crystallized⁸ world (104).

Nøjgaard delineates an angle from which one can approach the analysis of spatial objects in narrative. He writes of an object’s function in narrative: The object can have a symbolic function in the sense that it appears as an indice (indiciu) of some phenomenon. However, it can also function structurally. Words, objects or elements may have a key function structurally if “they enter into a particularly large amount of relations to other words in the text” (106).⁹ These key words or elements can be spotted on account of their particular

⁶ “Det narrative univers består selvfølgelig af alle de genstande, der kan sanses. De udgør, hvad man kunne kalde den narrative teksts tingverden”. Nøjgaard distinguishes between *objects* (genstande) and *elements* (elementer). While *objects* seems to refer to every item or thing that figures in a narrative, these objects become narrative *elements* at the point where they have a special significance in the narrative. Obviously, both objects and elements are first and foremost words.

⁷ While a spatial investigation of Woolf’s texts seen as an investigation of the category space, as such, would be an interesting thing indeed, I fear it would bring me too far into the field of philosophy. My use of the term *space*, though it certainly is conditioned by space understood as an ontological category, will always be a reference to literary space, and not to *real space*. Furthermore, I will distinguish the textual surface from the imaginary world it may create. The textual surface is always the text and words as they are distributed in sentences and paragraphs, the imaginary world (or poetic cosmos) is the images these words can create.

⁸ *Crystallized*, understood in the sense that it is divided into several distinct crystals that do not cohere (104).

⁹ “fordi de indgår et særlig stort antal forbindelser med andre ord i teksten”.

placement and function in the text. Nøjgaard lists four indicators of the presence of structural key words or elements: Repetition, contrast, placement and prominent assemblage (106).¹⁰ Repetition covers not only the exact repetition of a word or object, but also the repetition of similar words or objects. Likewise, contrasts or opposites can be regarded as an inverted repetition. In *TL* the window and the lighthouse are objects that quite obviously have a function in the text going beyond mere landscape description. They both lend their names to the title of the first and last part of the novel, the lighthouse also to the title of the novel, and take a key position structurally at that. The position given to them in the novel's world of things is a continuation of this; the special attention given to a title word is transferred to the objects that these words later denote in the text. In other words, they can both be regarded as key spatial elements.

Nøjgaard's idea of prominent assemblage has some similarities with J. Hillis Miller's idea of recurrence and repetition in narrative. According to Miller a "long work like a novel is interpreted, by whatever sort of reader, in part through the identification of recurrences and of meanings generated through recurrences" (*FR* 1). Similarly to Nøjgaard, he tracks the meaning through the occurrence of recurrence. However, Miller's notion of repetition seems to be far broader than Nøjgaard's. Miller writes of the repetition of rising and falling in Woolf's novel *Mrs Dalloway* (*FR* 185). These concepts are not bound to single words or objects; they recur rather in the narrative world than on the textual surface. I will return to Miller's idea of repetition firstly in Chapter Two in my discussion of the narrator of *TL*, and secondly, in Chapter Three, in my discussion of Lily's and Mr Ramsay's transformation of Mrs Ramsay into an art object.

The Unfolding of Space

The unfolding of external story space in "The Window" happens at a rather slow pace. The first sentences of the novel read: "'Yes, of course, if it is fine tomorrow,' said Mrs Ramsay. 'But you'll have to be up with the lark,' she added.'" (7). Since the sentences are direct discourse, they imply at least two characters, one speaking and one being spoken too. The first disclosure of the space in which these characters are situated, does not occur until halfway down the first page; not considering the characters as such elements, the first spatial element is the reference to James Ramsay "sitting on the floor cutting out pictures from the

¹⁰ "Gentagelse", "kontrast", "placering" and "påfallende sammenstillinger".

illustrated catalogue of the Army and Navy Stores” (7). The next spatial reference belonging to external story space, is the description of Mr Ramsay “stopping in front of the drawing-room window” (7) and Mrs Ramsay knitting a reddish-brown stocking (8), followed by the first of many references to the lighthouse (8). In the course of the first four pages, the story space is expanded by inclusion of the terrace outside the drawing-room window, on which Mr Ramsay is walking with his student Charles Tansley; a town in close proximity; and by mentioning the fact that the story takes place on the Isle of Skye in the Hebrides. But with the exception of some sparse remarks on the lighthouse lamp and the size of the rock it is situated on, there are no descriptions of any of these external spatial elements. Erich Auerbach describes how this lack of attention to external space is accompanied by an all the more attentive scrutiny of internal space. The text is dominated by “inner processes, that is, movements within the consciousness of individual personages” (529). It is the internal spaces of the characters that are given textual space, not the external features of the scenery. So, though there are external spatial elements figuring in the first and last part of *TL*, they only occasionally appear in between the ‘movements within the consciousness’ of the characters. And even though the window and the lighthouse are introduced in these opening pages, their, or any other spatial element’s, exterior is never described; they are flat. The world of things in *TW* is, as Morten Nøjgaard may have put it, fragmented.

The middle part of the novel pays considerably more attention to external space than the first and last part. While *TW* has a fragmented imaginary world, the detailed descriptions of space in *TP* create a world that is more densely populated with objects. The distinction between *TW* and *L*, and *TP*, is indicated already in the table of contents, though the intertitles seem to be more of a contrast to their content than confirmations of them. The window and the lighthouse (as objects, not titles) are objects belonging to external space, while the content of these parts of the novel is mostly made up of the characters’ inner space. *TP*, on the other hand, is dominated by external space. And though the structure of *TW* and *L* is similar, their worlds of things diverge by the placement of *TP* between them. The repetition of the structure of *TW* therefore has different qualities when it recurs in *L*. When considering the text as a linear succession, the story of *L* takes place in a much more detailed world of things than *TW*. When beginning to read *TW*, the novel’s world of things is not as dense as it becomes in the course of *TP*.

Instead of a chronologically distributed plot, *TW* and *L* are characterized by the thoughts and feelings of the characters rather than the description of external space. Even

though there is a series of events and actions that make up the plot of the novel, this plot is second to the characters musings and ‘inner processes’. After the long intermission of spatial description in TP, L opens with a prime example of this. Lily Briscoe is having breakfast in the dining-room of the summer house:

What does it mean then, what can it all mean? Lily Briscoe asked herself, wondering whether, since she had been left alone, it behoved her to go to the kitchen to fetch another cup of coffee or wait here. What does it mean? — a catchword that was, caught up from some book, fitting her thought loosely, for she could not, this first morning with the Ramsays, contract her feelings, could only make a phrase resound to cover the blankness of her mind until these vapours had shrunk. For really, what did she feel, come back after all these years and Mrs Ramsay dead? Nothing, nothing — nothing that she could express at all. (124)

The paragraph does not touch on external space at all, but is entirely made up of Lily’s thoughts. The kitchen and coffee cup may be present in this paragraph, but it is not the kitchen and the coffee cup as such, rather the *thought* of the kitchen and coffee cup. Lily does not go to the kitchen to get her coffee, she merely thinks of the possibility.¹¹ Morten Nøjgaard includes a discussion on whether or not thoughts can be narrative spatial elements. He comes to the conclusion that thoughts can be *conditional* spatial elements (195). As thoughts can only exist on the condition that there is a character or a narrator in the text whose thoughts they are, they cannot be actual spatial elements, only conditional. If thoughts are to be spatial elements in narrative, it is prerequisite that they are made explicit. If a thought can only be deciphered through the actions of a character, it cannot be part of narrative space. Lily’s thought of the kitchen and coffee is quite explicit. If she had been described leaving the dining room, cup in hand, we could perhaps have deciphered the motive of going to the kitchen to get coffee. However, this thought would not have been a spatial element, but the description of her leaving the room might have been. When she thinks of space (the kitchen), on the other hand, this thought can be treated as a spatial element. This way of describing space, by the thought of it rather than the reality of it, is the main narrative technique in TW and L. Much of

¹¹ Lily thinking of the kitchen and the coffee cup resembles how Andrew Ramsey famously describes for her the nature of Mr Ramsay’s philosophical work: “‘Subject and object and the nature of reality’, Andrew said. And when she said Heavens, she had no notion what that meant. ‘Think of a kitchen table then’, he told her, ‘when you’re not there’.” (22) Gillian Beer finds a philosophical undercurrent in *TL* which surfaces in episodes like these: “So the topics of the British Empiricists, Locke, Hume, Berkeley – the survival of the object without a perceiver, the nature of identity and non-entity, the scepticism about substance – lie beneath the activity of the narrative” (CG 32).

my argument in both Chapter Two and Three will be based on the notion of thoughts as spatial elements.

Perspective and Narration

When considering a novel in the terms of narrative space, the question of the narrator becomes apparent at the point where he becomes omniscient. If the narrator is not a character in the story, how does he function spatially? One of the most prominent features of *TL* is the seamless shifts in perspective. Auerbach describes how the narrator sometimes seems imperceptible; the story is conveyed by “spirits between heaven and earth, nameless spirits capable of penetrating the depths of the human soul” (532). The narrator follows each person closely and they are characterized both by the disclosure of their own thoughts and the other characters’ thoughts about them. Both *TW* and *L* have a person-oriented narration, and the third-person narrator often makes use of free indirect style as means to staying close to the characters. Though descriptions of the physical appearance of all the major characters are provided, it is their thoughts that make up most of the text, specifically their thoughts concerning their own and other characters’ mental and social dispositions. It is by the characters’ views of and on each other, that an image of them gradually is formed, not by the impartial view of a narrator. Often these depictions emerge through the use of an iterative technique; the characters are described rather by situations regarded as typical for them, than actual events. Charles Tansley is described by how “he would go to picture galleries ... and he would ask one, did one like his tie?” (*TL* 10), while Mrs Ramsay is described as wanting to open windows and close doors (42), though her only action concerning a window’s condition is when she closes the window in her children Cam and James’ bedroom in Chapter 18. Tansley does not perform the act he is characterized by; during the course of the novel he is never in a picture gallery, nor does he ever mention his tie. He is characterized through this image because this is the image he has created in the mind of other characters, in this specific case, the Ramsay children, and perhaps Mrs Ramsay. The truth of a character’s character always seems to happen in between several narrative perspectives. Firstly they are portrayed through their own thoughts. Secondly, they are portrayed through the way they are seen by others. And thirdly, they are portrayed by their view on others. There is never one single truth of the character presented to the reader by a seemingly neutral narrator. I will return to the

notion of truth in Chapter Three, and the narrator's position will also be a reoccurring topic in the following text.

The narrator's position in *TL* has been the subject of a number of studies. J. Hillis Miller discusses the inseparability of narrator and character in the article "Mr. Carmichael and Lily Briscoe: The Rhythm of Creativity in *To the Lighthouse*":

The narrator enters at will into the minds of all the characters, or perhaps it might be better to say that the narrator is located already within all those minds and is able to speak for them in that strange third-person, past-tense form of narration: indirect discourse, *erlebte rede*, or *style indirect libre* *To the Lighthouse* is a masterwork of exploration of the consciousness of others with the tool of indirect discourse, or to put it another way, it is a masterwork of the creation of the imaginary consciousness of others by means of this technique. (RCTL 173)

Though Miller seems to confuse indirect discourse with free indirect discourse here, his description of the Woolfian narrator as always in the mind of the characters, gives a good illustration of the transient nature of the narrator. He also describes the narrator as an "imaginary narrator" (172) and an entity that is "a ubiquitous mind, present everywhere at all times of the past, but condemned to know and feel only what the characters know and feel" (174). The narrator is in a sense *merged* with the characters; she hardly deviates from the perspectives of the characters. The exception from this inseparability between narrator and character is of course TP, where the characters rarely appear, and where the scenery is described from a panspatial and panchronic point of view. When seen in contrast to the narrator in the first and last parts, which is hardly distinguishable from the characters, Miller finds the narrative voice in TP to be a confirmation of the predominance of language to mind: "Language, *To the Lighthouse* implies, preexists everything human as its presupposition, for example in the universal human belief in the existence of minds or selves." (183). For Miller, the voice from nowhere in TP shows us that language is preexistent to thought, and that there can be no thinking without language (182). It is not possible to efface consciousness, and however depersonalized the narrative voice of TP is, it is not possible to think of the narrative voice as coming from nowhere, it seems always to be associated with some sort of consciousness.

Miller's reading of *TL* is centred on the narrator and seems based on a notion of *storytelling*, in the sense that the story is something that is *told*, and that is an abstraction of the spoken word. This idea seems to coincide with Gérard Genette's term *narrative voice*. Genette gives an account of two distinctly different ways of comprehending the distribution of

narrative events: that of narrative *mood* and that of narrative *voice*. Voice pertains to the act of *giving an account* of the events in a narrative, and is therefore always associated with a narrative person. Genette quotes the linguist Joseph Vendryés when he gives his definition of narrative voice: narrative voice is “the mode of action ... of the verb considered for its relation to the subject’ – the subject here being not only the person who carries out or submits to the action, but also the person ... who reports it” (ND 213). Miller’s assertion that language is a prerequisite for thinking of human consciousness, and thinking as such, seems to rely heavily on the notion of narrative voice. For Miller the novel becomes a demonstration of language constructing the human mind by way of the depersonalized voice of TP; how the reader almost inevitably constructs a narrating agent, even in an environment as person-less as TP, for Miller becomes evidence of language being prior to mind. Approaching the text of *TL* in the terms of a spatial metaphor, and Genette’s term *mood*, may lead to a different conclusion. Narrative mood, writes Genette, pertains to the “*regulation of narrative information*” (162). Specifically meaning the distance and the perspective from which narrative events are seen. While approaching the narrative text in the terms of voice rests on a linguistic metaphor, mood rather rests on a spatial metaphor. This is not to say that a reading based on voice is in any way wrong, it is rather to say that another reading is also possible. Coinciding with the focus on narrative space, my reading of *TL* will take place from the perspective of narrative mood. However, I will not eradicate the notion of voice entirely, this would hardly be necessary, and hardly desirable; my reading will include several turns by the narrator, though the consideration of voice will never become the main focus of this text.

Focalization: Dealing with Narrative Ambiguity

The narrator’s voice is difficult to locate in TW and L because of its merging with the characters’ minds. The characters’ voices are often equally troublesome. In the case of the aforementioned characterization of Charles Tansley going to the picture gallery, an analysis of narrative voice would entail tracing the origin of the statement through the minds of the various characters. Or as Genette puts it: by posing the question “*who speaks?*” (ND 186). The whole sentence describing Tansley reads: “And he would go to picture galleries, they said, and he would ask one, did one like his tie? God knows, said Rose, one did not” (*TL* 10). The ‘they’ here refers to Mr and Mrs R’s children (one of them being Rose), who do not approve of Mr Tansley. The whole section that this characterization is extracted from is a

portion of text that is more or less a rendering of Mrs R's thoughts. Reading this as a case of free indirect discourse, where the narrator's and the character's speech is blended together, causes a series of problems when posing the question *who speaks?* In this case it is not completely clear who is speaking. The first possibility regarding the origin of this statement is that it is Charles Tansley speaking through the filter of Rose, Mrs R and the narrator. If Tansley has in fact been to a picture gallery and asked Rose if she likes his tie, then one can assume that Rose at one point has narrated Tansley's speech by use of free indirect discourse, and that this narration is remembered by Mrs R and subsequently used by the narrator. This would make the statement some sort of double free indirect discourse, and the origin is Tansley. On the contrary, if Tansley has *not* been to a picture gallery with Rose, and the characterization of him is rather something that she has made up as an example of what he *would* say, then it is Rose who is the speaker, narrated through the memory of Mrs R. In addition we have the possibility that Mrs R is not in fact remembering her daughter's true words, but is thinking of something which it is likely that Rose *could have said*. In this case, Mrs R is the origin of the statement. Since the novel does not give any information about whether or not Charles Tansley has been to a picture gallery with Rose, it is not possible to discern who the speaker is.

This sort of narrative ambiguity concerning the origin of the statement is characteristic of Woolf's prose. There often seems, especially in *TL*, to be an uncertainty as to who the words can be traced back to. However, reading the novel in the terms of narrative mood, rather than narrative voice, allows one to skip the search for origin of the statement and focus on the question *who sees?* (ND 186). In the characterization of Tansley it is unquestionably Mrs R who sees. She is what Genette would call the *focal character* of this passage. And even though it might be Rose or Tansley who is speaking, it is upon Mrs R that the narrative is centred. Seen in this way, the fact that Mrs R is thinking of Tansley or Rose's statement becomes more relevant than finding out if they have in fact spoken. Their effect on Mrs R becomes the main field of investigation. For Genette the term *focalization* denotes a "restriction of field" (189) when it comes to how the story is told. While the term is undoubtedly a visual metaphor, it does not only indicate the description of visual panoramas in the narrative. The focal character is not only the one who sees in a literal sense, but also in a metaphorical sense, meaning that it is this character's point of view, or opinion, that guides the narrative. The question *who sees?* might as well be *who is the "focus of narration"* (189). Though the narrative here may include Tansley or Rose's words, the narrative focalization is

upon Mrs R, and it is her opinion that colours the words which they may or may not have spoken. However, though Mrs R is the focal character here, Genette's terms do not imply the idea that this is an act that she is performing. Mrs R does not control the narrative perspective; rather it is the narrative that is ordered in a focalization upon her. Within one focalization there is no distinction between that which Mrs R sees and her as a self; it is all a part of the same twist of the narrative.

The question of which character was to be the focal one caused some concern for Virginia Woolf when writing the ending of *TL*. The question of which character should be given the honour of closing the novel, occupied her thoughts to the extent that she mentions it in her diary:

The problem is how to bring Lily & Mr R[amsay]. together & make a combination of interest at the end. ... The last chapter which I begin tomorrow is In the Boat: I had meant to end with R. climbing on to the rock. If so, what becomes of Lily & her picture? ... Could I do it in a parenthesis? so that one had the sense of reading the two things at the same time? (*D3* 106)

In addition to being main characters, Lily and Mr Ramsay are each given a large portion of text in which they are focal characters. The question of who was to be the focal character in the last chapter is a matter that effects not only the structural ordering of the plot, but the meaning that is conveyed. Woolf wished to make the ending a 'combination of interest', suggesting that choosing either Lily or Mr R for bringing the novel to a close might favour the view of that character. The final version of the novel uses Lily as the focal character, and her finishing the picture that she is painting of Mrs R brings the story to a close. Mr R is the focal character in the penultimate chapter, when he reaches the lighthouse. These two characters, and the parts of the text in which they function as focal characters, will serve as point of departure for my reading of the novel. In both Chapter Two and Three it will be their view of Mrs R and the literary world around them that makes up most of my perspective. I will also spend some time with Mrs R's perspective, as well as Mr Banks'.

I will return to the term *focalization* repeatedly in my reading of *To the Lighthouse*. The question that Genette poses, 'who sees?', seems especially relevant to this text because the construction of visual space around the characters is essential to the experience of the novel. Which character is doing the seeing also has an effect on how we interpret what is being seen. While the structure is immensely complex when dealing with the novel in the terms of narrative voice, approaching it in the terms of mood allows one to deal with larger

portions of text which are distinctly seen from one character's point of view, or *focalizations*, as Genette puts it (ND 189). In his book *Narrative Discourse. An Essay in Method*, to which I have been referring, Genette writes of focalizations as how the narrative is focused on one character, the focal character (which can also be the narrator), and how the story, within such a focalization, is seen from a certain point of view. Focalizations can be internal or external, depending on if the point of focalization happens to be inside the character's thoughts or if he is seen only from without. When the narrative changes its focal point from one character to another, or perhaps to the narrator, Genette names it an *alteration* (194). There are several alterations in the first and last part of *TL*, for instance the alteration between Mr R and Lily between the last two chapters.

My reading will for the most part stay close to Genette's use of the term *focalization*. However, there has been some dispute about the exact meaning of this term. Similarly to Genette, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan argues for the use of the term *focalization* rather than *perspective* or *point of view*. She describes it as the mediation of a distinct perspective or point of view, without being identical with this perspective or point of view. In relation to the narration of a character's perspective, Rimmon-Kenan distinguishes between a speaker and a seer. The speaker is the narrator who is mediating the perspective in question, while the seer is the character whose perspective is being narrated. Using terms like *perspective* and *point of view* exclusively, tends to create confusion about whether it is the speaker's or the seer's perspective that is being examined. *Focalization*, on the other hand, allows for a distinction between the speaker and the seer, the narrator and focalization. The narrator is the entity that mediates a character's perspective, and this mediation is named focalization. What is in fact being narrated, i.e. the object of focalization, is distinguished from the focalizing subject, or the character: "The subject (the 'focalizer') is the agent whose perception orients the presentation, whereas the object (the 'focalized') is what the focalizer perceives" (75). The incident where Mrs R is thinking of Rose and Mr Tansley can be conceptualized in a different way using Rimmon-Kenan's version of the term focalization than it was with Genette's. Using Rimmon-Kenan one could say that Mrs R is a focalizer, and that Rose and Mr Tansley are the focalized objects. Mrs R is the one that sees, and what she sees is Mr T and Rose. However, Rose does not exist in external space here, only in Mrs R's mind, while Mr T is walking on the terrace not far from Mrs R, which would make him an object in external space. Mrs R's focalizing of Rose would then be as an object in Mrs R's own inner space, while Mr T is a focalized object in external space.

Genette does not agree with Rimmon-Kenan's use of the term *focalization*. In *Narrative Discourse Revisited* he gives an answer to her, and to other theoretician's use of the term. He also gives a more nuanced version of his own view:

For me, there is no focalizing or focalized character: *focalized* can be applied only to the narrative itself, and if *focalizer* applied to anyone, it could only be the person who *focalizes the narrative* – that is, the narrator, or, if one wanted to go outside the conventions of fiction, the *author* himself, who delegates (or does not delegate) to the narrator his power of focalizing or not focalizing. (NDR 73)

Genette's use of the term seems to have a wider range than Rimmon-Kenan's. While focalization for Genette seems to be a function *of* the narrative, for Rimmon-Kenan it is a function *within* a narrative world. Mrs R orients narration, and is therefore a focal character. However, within this focalization she can function as a focalizer (that perceives the world around her) or a focalized object (that is perceived by other characters). Genette describes a function that orients the narrative as a whole, while Rimmon-Kenan applies the term on events that happen within the narrative world. I find both uses of the term convenient and choose to use them both. I will use the terms *focalization* and *alteration* the same way as it seems to me that Genette uses them, that is, when referring to the overall focal point of the narrative. However, I will also apply Rimmon-Kenan's terms *focalized objects*, *focalizer* and *focalized* when speaking of characters that observe each other within the narrative world, and items that figure in the narrative. A character can be the focal character while at the same time being the focalizer, but she can also be the focal character while being the focalized object, that is, focalized by another character. Rimmon-Kenan's version of the term allows a more specific attention to objects which exist in narrative space than Genette, whose approach to visual space seems more abstract.

I would like to emphasise that the use of the terms *space* and *focalization* as an approach to analysing the text of *TL* is not a dismissal of studies that approach the text in the terms of a narrative voice. I do not wish to rebuke for instance Miller's reading in "Mr. Carmichael and Lily Briscoe", I will simply approach the text from a different angle. The fact that a passage from the novel can be read as a focalization does not alter the fact that it can *also* be an example of free indirect discourse. After all, a narrative text is not necessarily univocal, but is capable of expressing 'two things at the same time'. Nevertheless, I do maintain that the spatial approach is long overdue as a method in reading this novel. The

formation of visual space in an imaginary world plays a major part in the experience of most narratives, and especially *TL*.

Textual space

Until now I have considered literary space as something that exists inside the realm of an imaginary literary world. I have been presupposing a narrative world which has certain qualities. But perhaps there are *two* ways (or even more) of regarding literary space? And perhaps they both apply to a complex text like *TL*?

Approaching *TL* in the terms of spatiality implies having a preconceived idea of what space is. West-Pavlov gives an outline of two modes in which space in general can be, and has been, conceptualized: “Space has long been regarded in two ways: on the one hand, at a microcosmic level, as the gaps between things which, as it were, keep them apart; on the other hand, at a macrocosmic level, as the larger container into which all things are inserted” (15). There are several ways of thinking of the novel in relation to this conceptualization of space. First, one can think of the imaginary world of a novel as such a ‘container’ that holds all things that the novel entails. Consequently, the study of focalizations, or the way in which characters and objects are placed in relation to each other, would be the study of space at a microcosmic level. Second, by going beyond the scope of one particular literary product, one could regard the macrocosmos as being the realm of all literary products as a whole, and the study of the ‘gaps between things’ would be the study of the relations between literary products. This last way of seeing space coincides with the notion of *intertextuality* – the study of relations between texts.

The concept of intertextuality in literature is easily reduced to a meaning that endorses the study of sources or influences that act upon an author or a literary work. The concept of *intertextuality* is, theoretically speaking, a rejection of the search for origin; rather than tracing textual allusions and references back to their source, it is a study of how meaning comes to pass in the space between the texts. However, in critical theory the term often seems to wind up as a name for the study of sources, either biographical or literary. This is for instance the case in Jane de Gay’s *Virginia Woolf’s Novels and the Literary Past*, to which I will return below. I do not wish to use the term in this way, but will try to stay close to the meaning of the term as it figures in Julia Kristeva’s writing.

In a novel like *TL* the study of sources and influences has been a regular method of investigation. There are numerous quotations of poetry and references to several authors, literary, philosophic and historical, and to literary and art history too. Some of these references are marked as quotations, such as Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade" or Charles Elton's "Luriana Lurilee". Others are more subtle, and do not necessarily occur as quotations or immediately recognizable references. I do not wish to approach these quotations and allusions as literary sources, meaning that they are in any way the origin of the meaning that is produced in *TL*. Rather, I would like to approach the study of literary allusions through the definitions of intertextuality that Kristeva provides. Her notion of intertextuality, as well as her understanding of the text itself, calls for a more radical understanding of literature than can be covered by considering influences and sources which may appear in a specific literary work. In Chapter Three I will apply Kristeva's concept of intertextuality on *TL*, and since she has based her ideas on the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin, I will devote some space to him as well.

Text, Intertext and Literary Structure

For some the *text as such* is a presupposed category that does not call for further enquiry; without any examination of the term, it can be applied in the sense "the main body of printed or written matter on a page" or "the principal part of a book exclusive of front and back matter" (Webster). For others the *text* constitutes an area of investigation that entails questioning the very basis of being and contesting whether or not linguistic communication is at all possible. Julia Kristeva belongs to the latter group. She gives several descriptions and definitions of the text. The *text* is regarded as a process, rather than a fixed set of properties that the particular items which are placed in the category *text* must have. For Kristeva the text is a function that orders language, rather than a specific type of language: "the *text* is defined as a trans-linguistic apparatus that redistributes the order of language by relating communicative speech, which aims to inform directly, to a different kind of anterior or synchronic utterances" (*DL* 36). The function of the text is to be 'redistributive'; it produces a different language order that does not exclusively aim at being communication of information. In a text, communicative language is rearranged and attached to other and different types of utterances. Since the text relates to several types of utterances, not only the utterances that may be regarded as texts, it is also 'trans-linguistic'; it is not confined to one simple category,

but “operates through and across language, while remaining irreducible to its categories as they are presently assigned” (*DL* 36). So the text is a linguistic utterance that orders language in a certain way, and each utterance always stands in relation to other utterances.

Furthermore, the *literary text* is language that is distinguished by additional socio-historic factors. Bakhtin writes of the conditions that govern the creation and assimilation of literary works: “Actual social life and historical becoming create within an abstractly unitary national language a multitude of concrete worlds, a multitude of bounded verbal-ideological and social belief systems” (288). Within each of these ‘worlds’, or socio-historic situations, language functions in a specific way that is dissimilar to the way it functions in other ‘worlds’. Literary language constitutes one of these worlds, and within this world Bakhtin writes of a *stratification of language* that can be likened to literary structure or genre¹²:

Certain features of language (lexicological, semantic, syntactic) will knit together with the intentional aim, and overall accentual system inherent in one or another genre Certain features of language take on a specific flavor of a given genre: they knit together specific points of view, specific approaches, forms of thinking, nuances and accents characteristic of the given genre. (288-9)

The stratification of literary language is the way in which language is distributed into literary genres and structures. For Bakhtin, the literary text is first, then, a certain function of language, and second, the way this language functions within a socio-historic context.

Kristeva follows Bakhtin closely and writes of literary structure: “the texts presuppose several categories of narratives, either of the same period or written earlier, they appropriate the latter to themselves either to confirm or to reject them and at any rate to possess them” (*RPL* 9). In other words, the text is conditioned by other literary categories. But this is not limited to the fact that a literary work must be written within a certain genre. Each textual utterance always stands in relation to other utterances. These utterances which the text (as utterance) relates to, may be synchronic to the text, or anterior to it. Following the thoughts of Bakhtin closely, Kristeva describes how the literary text can be regarded as a mutation of history into literary structure, that is, the text absorbs and transforms anterior utterances. Genre as such can be considered as a category or a structure that governs all the texts which

¹² The terms *literary structure* and *genre* are used side by side by Bakhtin and Kristeva. The term *genre* seems to incline towards the category, the name, or similar external features connoted to the literary work, while *literary structure* slants towards the internal structure of a work. However, since it is the internal structure of a work that can be said to define which genre it belongs to, and likewise, that the presupposed idea of genre conditions the creation of the structure, it is almost impossible, and hardly beneficial, to define them separately.

are placed within this category. But what Kristeva wishes to convey is that there is no transcendental literary structure, and that every singular literary structure is generated in relation to a myriad of other singular literary structures, and that no structure (or genre) as such can be extracted from all the particular texts that are in existence. Kristeva's use of the term *text*, then, does not entail thinking of it as an autonomous literary product, but rather as a 'productivity' that is always in relation to other earlier utterances. She encourages us to think of the text as texture, as a connection of many different threads of meaning interlocking for a moment in a structure of words.

In *To the Lighthouse* some of the references are direct quotations, while others are more subtle textual allusions to the texts of other literary works. Some references are simply made by an author's name or by mentioning his work. Some books and authors are mentioned in the text in relation to certain characters, for instance Mr Ramsay reading Scott or Mrs Ramsay reading Shakespeare. All these quotations, references and allusions seem to play an important part in characterization. On the one hand they make comments on different characters; what the character happens to be reading says something of his or her personality. On the other hand the references function as connotations that engage literary history in the text of the novel. *TL* presupposes a number of literary categories, or perhaps 'possesses' them. All of the allusions and references serve as an incorporation of exterior literary structures. In Chapter Three I will centre my attention on principally one case of such an incorporation, and that is the participation of Romanticism in the structure of *TL*. I will show how the characterization of Mr R happens largely through the use of poetry in general, and specifically by the use of Romantic poetic structure.

When literary structures connect, the way in which they do so is the intertextual function. The different texts are considered as *textual surfaces* that intersect rather than rounded autonomous literary products. Kristeva uses Bakhtin's notion of the poetic word to explain one of the ways by which the intertextual function operates. Bakhtin describes three categories of words within a narrative, all of which function in different ways. These are, firstly, the *direct word*, which is situated in the discourse of the writer and therefore aims at denoting an object. This word has "*directionality toward the object*" (277); its aim is to create an artistic representation of an object, or an image of it. However, according to Bakhtin, this direct denotation is not possible, it is "penetrated by this dialogic play of verbal intentions that meet and are interwoven in it" (277). The word, though it aims at being a representation of the thing it denotes, cannot function purely as this. Kristeva supplements by noting that though

the pure representation of the object is not possible, it is not eradicated from the text. The object can be affiliated with the word in a way that is not a representation or depiction: “the denoted object does not disappear, it proliferates in mimetic, fictional, connoted objects” (RPL 56). The object is *connoted* by the direct word, rather than *denoted*.

Secondly, there is the *object-oriented word*, which takes place within the direct discourse of characters and is therefore simultaneously a direct word (in relation to the characters) and an object (for the writer). Thirdly, there is the *ambivalent word*, which comes into being by the joining of two sign-systems. It is the latter that becomes significant for the concept of intertextuality. For Kristeva poetic language is at least double, as “each word (text) is an intersection of word (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read” (DL 66). This ambivalent word can be regarded as an intersection between at least two sign-systems, and writing is the dialogic act of combining these. Another way of describing intertextuality is that it is the passage or transposition of one sign-system into another, though this would seem to imply that the first system is predominant over the second, which is not the case. Instead of looking for one sign-system’s, or text’s, influence on another, or reading one text as a paraphrase of another, the use of the ambivalent word as starting point allows one to regard both texts as complete in themselves, while still centring attention on the intersection.

Other descriptions of intertextuality include the impression of the text as a “mosaic of texts” (DL 41). Considering the text as a mosaic, implies a text which is fragmented and tabulated into innumerable signifying elements collectively creating a picture. Another description is the text considered as a *permutation of texts*: “The text is therefore a *productivity*, ... it is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another.” (DL 36). This implies that the text is not only a collection or collage of other texts, but also that it is constantly transforming the texts it is a mosaic of, as well as itself. This makes the text a ‘productivity’, and not a product, it is not possible to fix its meaning, it is constantly transformed by, and transforms, other texts and utterances. In Chapter Three I will discuss intersections between *To the Lighthouse* and texts that were published prior to this novel. I will also discuss intersections between several of Woolf’s novels. The aim of Chapter Three will be to shed some light on intertextuality in *TL*. However, I will also include sections from *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Waves* as support for some of my assertions regarding *TL*. I will show the textual incidents that intersect and together produce spaces between the texts that have consequences for what can be regarded as their meaning.

Intertextuality as a Spatial Matter

Writing ‘two things at the same time’ might not have been possible to achieve for Woolf when choosing an ending for *To the Lighthouse*. The sense of some sort of double perception of the novel might still be a possible way to read the novel as a whole. Intertextuality happens on several of the literary texts structural levels. It can be produced through a single ambivalent word; one single word can create an intersection between two sign-systems which alters them both. Intertextuality also happens as a structural intersection. All literary works are intertextual in this sense, due to the way they are regarded as generated in relation to other literary structures. Furthermore, one literary structure can be interpolated into different textual levels. A novel is written in an intertextual play with all the novels that exist, and this novel’s structure becomes a structural synchronization of all the novels of history. The intertextual relation is thus perceived on the level of the *genre*: a novel comes into being as a distillation of all other novels. However, intertextuality can also transverse textual levels by elements from one work being interpolated into another. Many of the allusions and references in *TL* are examples of elements from other works being interpolated into the novel. At one and the same time a sentence can be a part of a unified literary whole as well as a reference.

Examining intertextuality through the prism of genre seems to imply a notion of temporal development. Every particular work adds to the development of the idea of genre, which produces a new particular work, which then adds to the idea. The idea of the work is never identical with itself. This is, however, a temporal progression; the development of genre is something which happens over time. Though the idea of genre as a temporal progression only applies to the intertextual development of genre, it seems to be fairly easy to project this temporality on the concept of intertextuality as a whole. It is rather easy to regard the intertextuality of a specific work as a result of temporal progression. This may explain the tendency towards making the concept of intertextuality into the concept of influence. As long as intertextuality is regarded as a practice that comes into being over time, it may be hard to distinguish it from the concept of influence. However, intertextuality as a practice in space takes a different turn. By regarding the intertextual function as a practice which comes into being *between* texts, that is, in the spaces that are created by the intersection of textual surfaces by way of for instance ambivalent words, and not as a the influence of older texts on a newer text, the concept takes on a spatial meaning. The meanings that are set into play by the intersections are not created on the condition that one follows after the other in time; the intersections can occur at any time, and change rapidly.

Another aspect of the spatiality of intertextuality, is the way it gives the possibility of connecting several narrative spaces. Kristeva writes of what she calls Menippean ambivalence in novels: “Menippean ambivalence consists of communication between two spaces: that of the scene and that of the hieroglyph, that of representation *by* language, and that of experience *in* language, system and phrase, metaphor and metonymy. This ambivalence is the novel’s inheritance” (DL 85). Firstly, then, this ambivalence connects the spaces of visuality and language, the scene and the hieroglyph. As a continuation of this the connection has the potential of connecting several scenes or spaces with each other. The scene represented by language communicates with the experience in language. The visual elements communicate with its linguistic denotation, and by the structural interplay of denotations of visual elements, these visual elements communicate as well. Linguistic structure links together spaces, or scenes. One narrative space, containing a set of spatial objects, can connect to a separate narrative space through the process of intertextuality. Meaning connected to one narrative space can therefore be transferred to another narrative space. Through the communication of visual space with the linguistic sign, spaces also communicate and the meaning connoted to these spaces is brought into play.

Critical Reception

To the Lighthouse is easily the novel by Woolf that has received the most critical attention. However, I do not believe that my specific approach to the book has been attempted before. The study of narrative techniques has been a customary approach to Woolf’s novels, but as far as I know, the examination of narrative space has not been a part of this.¹³ The way I will use the term *focalization* in its literal sense, primarily as a spatial undertaking, and my attention to spatial elements and objects placed in the visual space which the novel consists of, is an approach to the novel which also seems to be a new. I will not spend much time accounting for the massive amount of secondary literature that has been written on the novel, but rather incorporate supplementary theoretical perspectives when demanded. The remainder of this chapter will be a short introduction to the secondary literature that covers contingent spaces to the ones I will cover in my reading of the novel.

¹³ In Siri Møllendal’s Master’s thesis “*To the Lighthouse* – en hermetisk provokasjon” (2003) she uses the term focalization in her reading of the novel. However, she uses the term in its metaphorical sense, and not in the literal sense I have applied here for analysis of narrative space.

Regarding the notion of intertextuality in Woolf, this is an issue that has been given some attention. Because of Woolf's widespread use of quotations and allusions, the study of the relation between her texts and other texts seems especially appropriate. However, the use of the term *intertextuality*, if it is used at all, often seems as if it is being used in a watered down version. This is the case for instance for Jane de Gay in her book *Virginia Woolf's Novels and the Literary Past*.¹⁴ Though de Gay evokes intertextuality, and quotes Kristeva in the introduction, her narrative soon becomes one of the writer and historical person Virginia Woolf. She centres her attention on how vital events and topics that were essential to Woolf's life and thinking are treated in her novels. In this regard the fiction becomes a place for, and result of, resolving personal issues. Though this may be enlightening from the viewpoint of wanting to know more about the author Virginia Woolf, especially her relation to her father, it is less interesting with regard to the text itself, and how this text can be read as an intersection of other texts regardless of the author's sympathies. De Gay does not see Woolf's texts as a mosaic, that is, a spatially organized image of textual signs. Rather she lapses into the version of the concept of intertextuality that applies it as the temporal succession of literary events, and the influence of the first of these on the later ones. In spite of de Gay's reducing intertextuality to influence, I will return to her study when discussing Woolf's use of her *tunnelling process* in Chapter Two. I will discuss the *tunnellings* as a spatial phenomenon and use de Gay's reading of a tunnelling in *Mrs Dalloway* to draw comparisons with tunnellings in *TL*.

While de Gay names her reading intertextual without taking into account the actual meaning of the term, Charles Schug boards on an intertextual reading in the strong sense without ever using the term. In *The Romantic Genesis of the Modern Novel* Schug writes about the formal and structural similarities between Romantic poetry and the Modern novel. He looks for Romantic structure in Woolf's novels and finds remnants of it in *TL* and *MD*. Schug's reading can be considered intertextual because it suggests that Modern novels are works that in some way have appropriated formal structures from Romantic works; the modern literary work has absorbed the structures of other historic periods and derives meaning from them. This line of thought coincides with the notion of intertextuality as a temporal development of literary structure, or genre; the idea of Romantic structure is absorbed by the idea of modern novelistic structure. Though I do not agree with all of Schug's

¹⁴ This is also the case for the thesis "Who's afraid of John Milton? A study into the intertextual relationship between Virginia Woolf and John Milton in *The Voyage Out* and *To the Lighthouse*" (1999) by Pellegrino Riccardi.

assumptions, I will use his reading as means to illustrate and discuss the structural interrelations that come into being through Woolf's work.

The influence of Romanticism on Woolf's work has been widely discussed. Most often this attention takes the shape of a search for traces of Romantic philosophy in Woolf's essays and novels. This is also the case for Ellen Tremper in "*Who Lived at Alfoxton?*" *Virginia Woolf and English Romanticism*. Tremper shares Schug's idea of similarities between the Romantics and the Moderns; she places emphasis on the Modernist gaze that can be likened to the gaze of the Romantic poets. However, her emphasis lies on Romantic thought and consciousness, especially the views of William Wordsworth, and the influence it had upon Woolf's writing. Instead of using Tremper in my discussion of the intertextual relationship of *TL* to certain specimens of Romantic thought, I will use her account of the Romantic idea of an *inner world*. I will spend time exploring the notion of internal and external space in *TL*. An important aspect of this exploration will be the Romantic idea of an inner world of consciousness, as opposed to the external world, and the tendency to desire a conflation between them. I will use both Tremper's and Janis M. Paul's readings of Woolf's novels as a space where the opposition between consciousness and world takes place. While Janis M. Paul also discusses the opposition between internal and external spaces in Woolf, she does not link it to Romanticism. For Paul the external world in Woolf's novels is linked to Victorian society and social behaviour. In her investigation of Victorian influences on Woolf's oeuvre, *The Victorian Heritage of Virginia Woolf*, she asserts that Woolf's devotion to depicting consciousness is a way of contesting a "Victorian world of externality" (185). Woolf's Modernism becomes the action of resisting fixed external forms by expressing the inner flow of consciousness. Paul and Tremper have in common the way in which they distinguish between internal and external space in Woolf, and link the spaces to literary periods. Both of them use the term *space* as a metaphor and not in the literal sense, that is, not as a denotation of visual space in Woolf's texts. However, the metaphorical use of the word *space* has a tendency to slip over into literality. Though the spaces they describe are figurative, they also suggest a way of reading which takes detours by literality. It is this literal attention to space that I will make use of in Chapter Two, where I discuss the qualities of narrative space and the visual in *TL*. I will discuss the visual nature of the internal and external spaces that are revealed by the narrative, though metaphorical historical space will also make an appearance.

Allen McLaurin has a different approach to space in Woolf. Though spatiality is not a major concern in his book *Virginia Woolf: The Echoes Enslaved*, he introduces the term *framing* as a name for the way in which characters in Woolf's novel seem to place a frame around certain objects and fellow characters. I will apply this term mainly because of its spatial nature. *Framing* functions as a description of the way visual space behaves in narrative; the image of a character or thing is given a narrative frame, and this is an incident that happens in space. This term can be likened to Rimmon-Kenan's use of *focalizer* and *focalized objects*, but by the use of the word *frame* it includes an aspect which is not covered by her. This aspect is the notion of the transformation of the object, or the character, into art. By placing a frame around the object, it can be likened to an object of art. McLaurin's inspiration for naming the term *framing* is due to Roger Fry's description of how an object can become an object of art. I will include Fry's critical essays when discussing the views on art, both explicit and implicit, in the novel. I will use the concept *framing* in my discussion of objects of art in *TL*. Mainly this will be in relation to Lily's picture, but also when discussing other spatial objects that are transformed into art by the framing of them.

Chapter Summary

The aim of this text is a spatial reading of Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse*. This reading will, firstly, pay attention to narrative space. Through a new and more literal application of the terms *focalization*, *focalizer* and *focalized object* I will examine how space is constructed in the novel. I will also apply the notion of the characters' *internal* and *external space* as a way of dealing with characterization as well as being a structural narrative technique.

Secondly, the many facets of the concept of intertextuality will be a point of departure for my reading of the novel. Though the concept of intertextuality is often reduced to influence, I will try to maintain the most radical version of the term. The radical version of intertextuality entails an understanding of it as something that comes into being between texts; as a spatial practice. The structural intersections, as well as ambivalent words in *TL*, will be the base for the intertextual reading.

Thirdly, the secondary literature which will appear in the remainder of the text will be theory that in some way can shed some light on narrative, visual or intertextual space in Woolf's novels.

Chapter Two: Visual space

This chapter will pay close attention to narrative space in *To the Lighthouse*. My discussion will rest on the *imaginary narrative world* as central metaphor. I wish to explore the different types of space that can be found in the novel. Some of the questions I will try to answer are: How does narrative space unfold? How is the imaginary world constructed and how do entities such as characters, objects and the narrator take place within this narrative space? How is the unfolding of space relevant for the characterization of major characters such as Mr Ramsay, Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe? While *TL* will be my primary concern, I will also take some detours by *The Waves* and *Mrs Dalloway*. These novels will provide both contrasts to, and confirmations of, my reading of *TL*.

My analysis in this chapter rests on the question *How does this text function?* rather than posing the question *What does this text mean?* This entails a focus on literary techniques rather than finding one meaning in the text. Though it seems to be almost impossible to leave out meaning all together, and this is hardly an admirable goal any way, the main aim is to examine how space functions in the novel, and the way in which the novel produces its space.

Time Which Becomes Space

As I noted in the Introduction, the space/time-duality is a common approach to analysing narrative texts. While the time side of the opposition traditionally has been the favoured one, I will concentrate on the space side. However, as the two are closely connected, I will commence with a consideration of how the space/time opposition articulates itself in *To the Lighthouse*.

The story-time passes with a slow pace in “The Window” and “The Lighthouse”. While the portion of text dedicated to it makes up the majority of the novel, the time that passes is less than a day in each part. In contrast to this, several years go by in “Time Passes”, while this part of the novel is only given a few pages of text-time. Though the narrative of TP sweeps over a long period of time almost without considering the events which now and then are introduced in brackets, it does pay close attention to space. The most striking feature of the opposition between space and time in the novel, is the radical changes in the relationship between text-time and story-time which correspond with the changes in pace. The rendering of space in the three different parts of the novel also changes character. The detailed

description of the deterioration, and later restoration, of the summer house creates an ample image of the surroundings in which the story of TW and L takes place:

So with the house empty and the doors locked and the mattresses rolled round, those stray airs, advance guards of great armies, blustered in, brushed bare boards, nibbled and fanned, met nothing in bedroom or drawing-room that wholly resisted them but only hangings that flapped, wood that creaked, the bare legs of tables, saucepans and china already furred, tarnished, cracked. What people had shed and left — a pair of shoes, a shooting cap, some faded skirts and coats in wardrobes — those alone kept the human shape and in the emptiness indicated how once they were filled and animated; how once hands were busy with hooks and buttons; how once the looking-glass had held a face; had held a world hollowed out in which a figure turned, a hand flashed, the door opened, in came children rushing and tumbling; and went out again. Now, day after day, light turned, like a flower reflected in water, its sharp image on the wall opposite. Only the shadows of the trees, flourishing in the wind, made obeisance on the wall, and for a moment darkened the pool in which light reflected itself; or birds, flying, made a soft spot flutter slowly across the bedroom floor. (105-6)

Spatial objects such as mattresses, saucepans and faded clothes, and descriptions of surroundings such as walls, floors and the trees outside, make up almost all of the text in TP. The bracketed events, such as Mrs Ramsay's death, are not given any further comment. By letting time pass, not by depiction of the characters' doings and whereabouts, but by excluding them almost entirely from this part of the novel, the passing of time becomes something other than the growth or decline of character. Time becomes, not the effect time has on narrative persons, but the effect it has on objects. That is, the passing of time has become a spatial matter. Seeing that the specific period of time which passes in this section includes a world war that hardly is mentioned, it is not far off to say that time has become something which leaves out any human involvement. Character development and socio-cultural evolution seems to be replaced by a much more wide-ranging idea of time. It is not the time of small things, such as humans and their doings, but the time of nature and the ages.

The passing of time in narrative texts is a complicated matter. Rimmon-Kenan distinguishes between story-time and text-time (44). The story-time in TP is the ten years that pass in the imaginary world constructed in this part of the book. The text-time is the time of "a spoken or written discourse which undertakes [the events'] telling" (3), that is, the portion of text that is devoted to the telling of these ten years of story-time. In my Oxford Edition of *TL* this would be approximately fifteen pages. However, text-time is, Rimmon-Kenan remarks, basically always spatial: "What discussions of text-time actually refer to is the linear

(spatial) disposition of linguistic segments in the continuum of the text” (44). Yet, what Woolf does in TP, is not to bring the reader’s attention to the materiality of the text, but to the materiality of time as it is constructed in the imaginary world of the text. By reducing text-time to a bare minimum, and giving so much attention to the visible world of the novel, it is as if time is converted into space. Centring the narrative on the summer house, and not on the characters, seems to turn the passage of time into a spatial element.

The narrative in TP pays close attention to space, and the space it deals with is the summer house and its surroundings. Bringing in Lothe’s terms *discourse space* and *story space*, a question comes up regarding which category the space which is described in TP might be placed in. Since it is a space that only the narrator, at this point, has access to, it fits into the category *discourse space*; it is a house which has been left by the characters, a house with its ‘doors locked and the mattresses rolled round’. If one regards the story space as the space in which the story unfolds, the story space is elsewhere; the events in TP are the bracketed events that happen far away. In TW and L the story space is equally distant. As I described in the introduction, the first pages hardly include any spatial elements. The frequent and often unexpected shifts in perspective might also function as disorienting to the reader when experiencing narrative space. Which spatial elements are situated where, and if these elements belong to the story space or the discourse space, is not at all clear. However, the space that is described in TP is the space which the events of TW and L happen in. In a sense it is as if the story space of the first and last part of the novel only exists in the middle part. When reading the book for the first time, the fact that the first part hardly has any spatial references might cause disorientation, but when the reader makes his way through TP and reads the last part, it takes place in a much more detailed world of things. Every detail of the summer house and its surroundings has been described, and the disorientation from the first part might not be as dominant. Though the structure in the first and last part is similar, and the topics and motifs that are used are much the same, the placement of TP between them creates a much more stable sense of space. This again might contribute to the sense of closure; the destabilization of space comes to an end as Mr Ramsay’s boat reaches the lighthouse.

Whether the spatial elements in TP are properties of the discourse space or the story space is a matter of debate. But it is no doubt that it is a case of *external space*; it is the features of an external world that are being described. TW and L, however, mostly consist of characters’ *internal space*, as is exemplified by for instance the opening of L that I quoted in the Introduction, where Lily is thinking of getting a cup of coffee. The opening of the novel

correspondingly sticks with the characters' thoughts and feelings. The first sentence of the novel is direct discourse; Mrs R says that perhaps they can go to the Lighthouse the next morning. However, already in the next sentence the narrative centres on James:

To her son these words conveyed an extraordinary joy, as if it were settled, the expedition were bound to take place, and the wonder to which he had looked forward, for years and years it seemed, was, after a night's darkness and a day's sail, within touch. Since he belonged, even at the age of six, to that great clan which cannot keep this feeling separate from that, but must let future prospects, with their joys and sorrows, cloud what is actually at hand, since to such people even in earliest childhood any turn in the wheel of sensation has the power to crystallize and transfix the moment upon which its gloom or radiance rests, James Ramsay, sitting on the floor cutting out pictures from the illustrated catalogue of the Army and Navy stores, endowed the picture of a refrigerator, as his mother spoke, with heavenly bliss. It was fringed with joy. The wheelbarrow, the lawnmower, the sound of poplar trees, leaves whitening before rain, rooks cawing, brooms knocking, dresses rustling — all these were so coloured and distinguished in his mind that he had already his private code, his secret language, though he appeared the image of stark and uncompromising severity, with his high forehead and his fierce blue eyes, impeccably candid and pure, frowning slightly at the sight of human frailty, so that his mother, watching him guide his scissors neatly round the refrigerator, imagined him all red and ermine on the Bench or directing a stern and momentous enterprise in some crisis of public affairs. (7)

The only information regarding external space here is that James is sitting on the floor and that he has a catalogue he is cutting out illustrations from. This activity must also involve a pair of scissors, though these are not mentioned. Yet, there are several reports of his inner world or feelings: he has a sense of 'extraordinary joy', he looks forward to going to the lighthouse, he 'cannot keep this feeling separate from that', his mother's voice is to him 'heavenly bliss' which is 'fringed with joy' and he frowns on human frailty. This narrative attention to thoughts and feelings prevails while references to external space are limited. Furthermore, it is as if external space is set aside for the benefit of internal space; the inner worlds of characters are what create the conditions for the organization of narrative space.

As well as destabilizing the feeling of narrative space, these first pages of *TL* demonstrate the differences in Genette and Rimmon-Kenan's use of the term focalization. It is James that is the centre of attention until his mother's view becomes predominant on the second page. She becomes the centre of the narrative from her second utterance: "'But it may be fine — I expect it will be fine' said Mrs Ramsay, making some little twist of the reddish-brown stocking she was knitting impatiently" (8). Mrs R stays the centre for quite some time. In Genette's terms one could say that James is the focal character in the opening. With Mrs

R's second utterance there takes place an *alteration* and Mrs R becomes the focal character. In this case it is the overall focus of the narrative that determines who or what can be regarded as the focal character. Using Rimmon-Kenan's version of the term, *focalizer* and *focalized*, however, paints a different picture. Though James certainly is the centre of attention, not all of the paragraph quoted above can be regarded as being seen from James specific perspective. Rather, it seems to be the case that the focalizer alternates between being James, Mrs R and the narrator. First we follow James seeing into the future and his expectation of going to the lighthouse. Then the narrator's perspective takes over and James becomes the focalized object: 'Since he belonged, even at the age of six, to that great clan which cannot keep this feeling separate from that, ... James Ramsay, sitting on the floor cutting out pictures from the illustrated catalogue of the Army and Navy stores'. Towards the end of the paragraph, however, his mother becomes focalizer with her image of him 'all red and ermine on the Bench'. The experience of space in this opening paragraph is not only destabilized because of the absence of external objects, but also by several focalizer shifts. It is as if one enters a spatial void where there are no fixed points available, and where meaning seems to be postponed until one can find such a point to which one can attach it.

The rapid focalizer shifts are also a way of conceptualizing the difference between the three different parts of *TL*; "Time Passes" on the one hand, and "The Window" and "The Lighthouse" on the other. Using Rimmon-Kenan's version of the term one can say that in *TW* and *L* focalization for the most part shifts between several internal focalizers (the characters), and only small portions of the narrative are distributed through a narrator-focalizer. However, this is not as prominent in *TP* as it is in the other parts of the novel; the characters do not function as focalizers in this middle part. In *TP* the focalizer is for the most part a panchronic and panspatial narrator-focalizer who has access to everything and anytime simultaneously. This narrator can at the same time give a description of every detail in the progression of the decaying summer house, as well as give information regarding events in the life of the characters who are situated in entirely different places. Since the focalizer so seldom is a narrator-focalizer, and only small portions of the narrative in *TW* and *L* are distributed by a narrator-focalizer, it creates a question of whether there is a narrator present at all. In Genette's terms *TP* becomes an example of *zero focalization*, where the focus is placed "at a point so indefinite, or so remote, with so panoramic a field (the well-known 'viewpoint of God,' or Sirius, about which people periodically wonder whether it is indeed a point of view)

that it cannot coincide with any character” (*NDR* 73). The question of the narrator will be the focus of the following section.

The Placement of the Narrator: Can a Voice Be Spatial?

The way the visual and spatial objects dominate the narrative in TP, and the general treatment of spatial elements in all of *TL* as well, is closely interrelated with the narrator’s position. As the quotation from TP above illustrates, the omniscience of the narrator in this part of the novel is largely achieved by the narrative attention to space. The narrator seems to be several places at the same time: somewhere in the vicinity of the summer house, in London, and in France. Yet, since the characters are given so little text-time (or perhaps text-space) in TP, the narrator is more noticeable here than in the other parts of the novel. As J. Hillis Miller writes, it is hard to imagine the narrator in TP without thinking of it as a voice. In TW and L the narrator’s voice does not seem to be present in the same way. It is hard to single out any part of the text where the narrator’s presence is dominant, and there does not seem to be convincing evidence that the narrator is in fact a separate entity. As the opening paragraph of the novel illustrates, the narrator keeps so close to the characters that it takes a very close reading to pinpoint her exact location. Janis M. Paul describes the narrator as a voice who “[s]o completely ... merge[s] with the thoughts of the characters that it seems to be simultaneously the voice of everyone, someone, and no one” (175). This is not to say that the perspectives taken are in any way homogeneous or uniform and that the characters’ perspectives’ become properties of the narrator. The narrator’s merging with the thoughts of the characters seems rather to create an interesting ambiguity in relation to the narrator’s placement in space; the narrator shares the space of the characters. Ellen Tremper describes the narrator as “Woolf’s idiosyncratic narrative voice, which uninterruptedly flows into and out of the consciousnesses of her characters without our registering its precise location” (19). For Tremper, then, Woolf’s narrator is a separate entity who has access to everything. For Paul, on the other hand, the narrator seems to be conditioned by the characters. These two positions seem to be perfect opposites. On the one hand there is Tremper’s idea of the narrator that at will does what she pleases, and on the other, there is Paul’s, who is totally dependent on the characters. Both imply the notion of *where the narrator is positioned*, that is, an idea of the narrator as a spatial component in narrative.

One often considers the narrator as a structural entity that in some way has a privileged position prior to the characters. The omniscient narrator is all-knowing, and has access to every part of the fictional world. In this sense the narrator's merging with the characters becomes an act of a narrator-subject who in some sense controls the world it is a part of. This does not seem to be the case in *TL*, the narrator does not seem to have opinions on the characters. This is demonstrated already on the first page in the first description of Mr Ramsay:

Such were the extremes of emotion that Mr Ramsay exited in his children's breast by his mere presence; standing as now, lean as a knife, narrow as the blade of one, grinning sarcastically, not only with the pleasure of disillusioning his son and casting ridicule upon his wife, who was ten thousand times better in every way than he was (James thought), but also with some secret conceit at his own accuracy of judgement. (7-8)

Though Mr R is described in quite negative terms, the parenthetical insertion '(James thought)' redirects the origin of the opinion from the narrator. The beginning of the sentence might lead the reader to believe that this is the objective opinion of the narrator, though the parenthesis effectively invalidates this belief. And though the narrator in TP is panspatial and panchronic and seems to exist in a far more independent way than in L and TW, it still does not utter opinions. The narrator seems to deny his own existence. This leads to the question of whether the narrator can in fact be regarded as an entity, or a voice, in the same sense as the characters can. Does it make sense to even speak of a narrator?

When the narrator is more or less absent, as in TW and L, the question of *who sees*? once again becomes relevant. *What* he happens to be seeing, that is, which space and which objects, also becomes a matter that should be considered. As I have mentioned above, the narrative in TP pays special attention to the summer house and the landscape surrounding it, though the actual story, that is, the bracketed information of several momentous events in the lives of the characters, takes place elsewhere. In TW and L, where the story in fact takes place in these surroundings, the external space of the novel hardly figures at all except through the prism of the characters' eyes or consciousness. Much of the information about the landscape around the summer house is given to the reader this way, for instance the information about the size of the lighthouse lawn that appears in Mrs R's pitying consideration of the lighthouse keeper: "For how would you like to be shut up for a whole month at a time, and possibly more in stormy weather, upon a rock the size of a tennis lawn? she would ask; and to have no letters

or newspapers, and to see nobody” (8). The view of the lighthouse that appears in her memory of her walk with Charles Tansley functions in the same way:

For the great plateful of blue water was before her; the hoary Lighthouse, distant, austere, in the midst; and on the right, as far as the eye could see, fading and falling, in soft low pleats, the green sand dunes with the wild flowing grasses on them, which always seemed to be running away into some moon country, uninhabited of men. That was the view, she said, stopping, growing greyer-eyed, that her husband loved. (14)

After the alteration between James and Mrs R on the second page of the novel, Mrs R continues to be the focal character for quite some time. The narrative seems to float in and out of her thoughts and memories. The focalized object in this passage is not ‘the great plateful of blue water’ as it exists in the external space of the novel, but rather it is an object in the memory belonging to Mrs R, and therefore either a memory of an external focalized object, or an inner focalized object. Either way, it is not uncoloured by Mrs R’s consciousness. So rather than an omniscient narrator describing the visual setting, external space is narrated through the memory of a character. Not only does external space hardly appear in the narrative, the spatial elements and descriptions which do appear, in the text in the first and last part of the novel, are often presented by way of the inner space of a character. That is, they are not presented in a way that can be regarded as uncoloured by a character’s consciousness or view of the world. Consequently, the external space of these parts is always linked to the characters’ consciousnesses, and the spatial qualities can never be parted entirely from the characters’ mental faculties.

The attention to character’s inner space is a method Woolf uses in several of her novels. When working on *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf writes in her diary of a new literary technique that she has found herself using: “I should say a good deal about The Hours, & my discovery; how I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters; I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humour, depth. The idea is that the caves shall connect, & each comes to daylight at the present moment” (D2 263). This technique, which has later become known as Woolf’s *tunneling process*¹⁵, is at first glance an example of the exploration of a characters’ inner space; the narrative often tunnels into a character’s memory of the past. The fact that Woolf describes these tunnels as being ‘behind’ the characters suggests that the tunnels are something behind their external features, that is, in their heads. A tunnel in this sense would

¹⁵ Erich Auerbach uses the term *excursus* to describe these narrative expeditions into internal space (537). This seems to imply an understanding of them as digressions, or as something that deviates from the path of the narrative.

be a purely psychological activity and an engagement with space which is entirely abstract. However, the inner space that Woolf digs out may also be a tunnel that can be understood in a more concrete sense, as a spatial tunnel that is dug out by the narrative. If there is such a thing as internal space, it would also be possible to dig a tunnel into it. It might also be tangent to external space, or the story space of the novel.

When pairing this concept of a tunnelling process with the idea of the narrator as voice, some interesting questions emerge. How can the tunnelling process be conceptualized? Sections such as Mr R's speculations in Chapter 6, to which I will return later, bring these problems to attention. Mr Bankes' memory of Mr R on a road in Westmorland poses similar questions:

Looking at the far sand-hills, William Bankes thought of Ramsay: thought of a road in Westmorland, thought of Ramsay striding along a road by himself hung round with that solitude which seemed to be his natural air. But this was suddenly interrupted, William Bankes remembered (and this must refer to some actual incident), by a hen, straddling her wings out in protection of a covey of little chicks, upon which Ramsay, stopping, pointed his stick and said 'Pretty — pretty,' an odd illumination in to his heart, Bankes had thought it, which showed his simplicity, his sympathy with humble things; but it seemed to him as if their friendship had ceased, there, on that stretch of road. (20-1)

Presupposing a narrative voice, one could regard these tunnellings as a case of speech or thought representation in indirect or free indirect style. In terms of focalization on the other hand, these memories become the focalized objects of the remembering character-focalizer. Consequently it may not be suitable to speak of a narrator that merges with the characters. Rather, there is a narrator-focalizer who might not exist simultaneously, and might not share narrative space, with a character-focalizer. From which object, or point in narrative space, the story is being told, becomes predominant to which voice is speaking. Who is looking, and what does he see? An omniscient narrator that is panspatial and panchronic, as is the case in TP, and which functions as focalizer, gives *one* visual view of the story, while a character brings something else, perhaps a point of view that is coloured by their feelings and experience. So, though the digging out of caves behind the characters might be an action performed by the historical author Woolf, it must not necessarily be an action performed by the narrator; the narrator's voice is not necessarily always present in addition to a character's voice or thoughts.

If the tunnelling process, memories and thoughts can be regarded as focalized objects of a character's internal space, what then of objects belonging to the external space of the novel? The case of Mr Bankes memory of Mr R on a road in Westmorland is not contiguous to the story space in the same way as Mrs R's vision of the sea. The only elements of this passage that can be regarded as external are the sand-hills that function as incentive to his thinking of the memory. Westmorland is not a part of the story space; it does not make up any part in the external space that the story unfolds in. Accordingly, though it is a memory of something external to the character-focalizer Mr Bankes (it is not the memory of a feeling), in the narrative it functions purely as internal space. Mrs R's vision of the sea quoted above is, however, indeed a description of the external story space of the novel, but it is a description coloured by Mrs R's eyes. Even when using the concept of focalization, then, uncertainties arise as to which space is actually being presented, the external space of the story or external space, as it is perceived through the prism of a character's mind, that is, external space which has been internalized. The memory of external space is not equivalent to external space itself, and the objects focalized by a remembering character-focalizer thus cannot be regarded as accounted for in an impersonal manner. When the sea is focalized by Mrs R the description is coloured by the connotations she makes to it: the fact that her husband particularly likes this view. The adjectives 'austere' and 'hoary' or the description of the landscape being like 'some moon country' can both be descriptive of the view as such, or be connotations Mrs R is making to it. The description of an external view becomes both external and internal at the same time; the passage denotes both the landscape in which the story unfolds, and the memory of the vision of the landscape in Mrs R's mind. Instead of a narrative voice that is merged with the characters, we find a character's inward spatial focalization that merges with an outward one and an inner focalized object that merges with an external focalized object, that is, external and internal space converge.

The narrator's position is a problematic field of investigation when reading several other of Woolf's novels as well. In the Introduction I gave an account of J. Hillis Miller's reading of *TL* and how he figures that the narrator is present everywhere. The narrator relates to the characters as someone who 'is located already within all those minds and is able to speak for them'. In his reading of *MD* he takes the idea of location and spatiality in relation to the narrator one step further:

In *Mrs. Dalloway* nothing exists for the narrator which does not exist in the minds of the characters, whether it be a thought or a thing. This is implied in those passages in

which an external object ... is used as a means of transition from the mind of one character to the mind of another. ... Such transitions seem to suggest that the solid existing things of the external world unify the minds of separate persons (*FR* 180).

For Miller, Woolf's narrator cannot exist independently; it has no space of its own which allows it to be a self-sufficient entity. In Lothe's terms, one could say that there is no discourse space; there is no space that is accessible only to the narrator. Though this may be the case for *MD*, where the narrator has more or less the same position throughout the novel, including a section like TP complicates the matter, and for Miller creates a voice who, because of its apparent lack of origin, becomes evidence of the predominance of language to mind.

A later novel, like *The Waves*, brings other narrative techniques to the table. Formally speaking, *TL* is far less abstract than *W*. However absent the voice of the narrator must seem in *TL*, there is undeniably a structuring point present which cannot be linked to the characters. In *W* there is hardly any part of text that cannot be regarded as the speech or thoughts of one of the characters:

I see a ring,' said Bernard, 'hanging above me. It quivers and hangs in a loop of light.'

'I see a slab of pale yellow,' said Susan, 'spreading away until it meets a purple stripe.'

'I hear a sound,' said Rhoda, 'cheep, chirp; cheep chirp; going up and down.'

'I see a globe,' said Neville, 'hanging down in a drop against the enormous flanks of some hill.' (*W* 5)

This pseudo-dialogical structure continues almost all the way through the novel. *The Waves* can be described as six intertwining monologues periodically interrupted by descriptions of the sea at different times of day. On the face of it the entire novel consists of direct discourse, and the narrator only seems present in the opening of each speech in the form of a 'said Rhoda' or a 'said Neville'. However, the abstractness of speech representation in *W* seems to require a structuring principle. Six characters mouth their thoughts and feelings, but their speech never occurs as dialogue; the voices do not interact verbally with each other, neither do they respond to each other's speech, though their speeches often revolve around similar events, thoughts or feelings.

Presupposing a perpetually present narrator in *W*, one could say that though the degree of perceptibility of the narrator at first glance seems to be low, the abstractness of speech representation here requires a very strong structuring principle. If one accepts the speeches as

examples of direct speech i.e. representations of a character's actual speech, the narrator is covert, and the degree of perceptibility low. Conversely, if one regards these speeches as too abstracted from an actual situation in which the character's can speak, they can be regarded as a form of free indirect discourse which disguises itself as direct discourse. The degree of perceptibility must then be high, because the narrator's voice is required when using a technique like free indirect discourse. Again Miller's claim that Woolf's narrative voice demonstrates the pre-existence of language comes to mind. As *W* largely consist of some sort of speech representation, it is hardly possible to establish any stable sense of spatial elements. In terms of focalizer/focalized one could say that the narrator does not function as focalizer other than in the intermitting descriptions of the sea. In a sense the novel is a set of six character-focalizers through which the story is told, and the structuring principle of the novel could be visual as well as related to voice. Using Genette's terms, one could say that every change of speaker is an alteration of the focal character. However, this does seem a bit forced, as the whole point of *W* seems to be the concept of *voice*. The novel exists almost purely in the terms of the voices that mouth it. The question of whether or not these voices have bodies, and consequently exist in space, is a question there regrettably is no more room for in this context.

TL is not as experimental in form as *W*, but they still share many of the same traits, and the question of whether the structuring principle of this novel can be called a voice, a narrative voice, is pertinent here as well. Does the narrative voice of *TL* have features that can justify its constitution as a speaking conscious self? I would say no. Though there undoubtedly is a structuring entity present in the novel, it is perhaps a projection to give this entity the attributes of an 'I', that is, a consciousness, a will, and a voice. Therefore, the concept of focalization seems especially adequate to *TL*. Focalization does not imply a subject who is doing the focalizing. There may be a narrator-focalizer, and a character-focalized, or a character-focalizer and a focalized-object, but there is no entity within the text that wills this focalizing (perhaps in the real author's act of writing, but that is not necessarily significant for the analysis of the text itself); the narrator is not the performer of the act of focalizing. Any entity in the text can in principle be the focalizer, and though traditionally it is the narrator-focalizer who is most common, this is not the case in *TL*. Instead of regarding the narrator as always present in the text, and merged with the characters, it is possible to regard every spatial object in the novel as a potential focalizer from which point the story can be told. Instead of a narrating agent, the story unfolds in the span of the visual space or landscape

which it focalizes. And this might be one of the keys to the narrator's omniscience: if the narrator seems to be spatially imperceptible, if she does not seem to have a *position*, then the construction of her as speaking 'I' is undermined. Consequently, any opinions or judgments which may be made in *TL* cannot be traced back to a single narrative source, and the novel's meaning stays ambiguous to the last.

Visual Structure: Objects and Structural Key Elements

Considering *To the Lighthouse* as an imaginary world of things, or a visual space within which there is a certain amount of structuring points that the story can be viewed from, and considering the characters as focalizers, leads on to the question of what is being looked at. How are the objects which figure in the novel arranged and what is their significance in the unfolding of space? Which objects are focalized by which focalizers? And are these connections significant for characterization? In the Introduction I mentioned how the window and the lighthouse (considered as objects in the novel's world of things) have a key position structurally. It is these two objects which are the first and main contribution to the creation of narrative space. Regarding the lighthouse and the window as key spatial elements seems unproblematic, but there may be other objects that function in a way significant to the unfolding of the novel's world of things, without them being as obviously important as these two.¹⁶ Although the space between them is not filled with objects until the detailed descriptions of space in TP, and the narrative space of *TL* stays transparent all the way through TW, the few objects that do appear have a remarkable effect just due to the fact that there are so few of them.

Though TW's spatial environment is transparent, and that it may be difficult to visualise any specific scenery or background, there are still several objects figuring in the narrative which do in fact belong to external space. Though much of the narrative revolves around the characters' thoughts and feelings, or as the digging out of 'beautiful caves', these spatial elements reoccur in the narrative often enough that one can ascribe to them a certain significance. Previously I have mentioned two instances of cave-digging, or tunnellings: Mr Banks' consideration of his friendship with Mr Ramsay, and Mrs Ramsay's rather longer (or deeper) tunnel in which a number of subjects, ranging from her guests, her marriage and

¹⁶ There are of course other structural key elements than the ones I will include in the following discussion. For instance, the lighthouse, which I will not give that much consideration. This is simply because the lighthouse has been given so much attention already that I doubt I could say anything new on the subject.

several of her guests' marriages, to the nature of her beauty and tonight's dinner, are introduced to the reader. Both of the tunnels commence with a spatial element belonging to the external space of the novel. Mr Bankes' tunnel is dug into his internal space while he is '[l]ooking at the far sand-hills'; the sand-hills become a visual starting point for his consideration of his friendship with Mr R. Mrs R, however, drifts off into her own thoughts while she is "making some little twist of the reddish brown-stockings she was knitting, impatiently" (8). The reddish-brown stockings appear several times in TW (page 27, 54 and 100), all in connection with Mrs R's thoughts.¹⁷ The first two occurrences correspond with alterations of the focal character. The first one, on page eight, which I have described above, is an alteration from James to Mrs R. The second one (page 27) similarly is an alteration from Mr Bankes to Mrs R. Mr Bankes is thinking of Mrs R's beauty and as the perspective changes, the stocking appears again:

And [Mr Bankes] thought of Mrs Ramsay as he looked at that stir among the unfinished walls. ... He did not know. He did not know. He must go to his work. ... Knitting her reddish-brown hairy stocking, ... Mrs Ramsay smoothed out what had been harsh in her manner before Starting from her musings she gave meanings to words which she had held meaningless in her mind for a long stretch of time. (27-8)

Both of these appearances seem to be what J. Hillis Miller described in reference to *MD* as how 'an external object ... is used as a means of transition from the mind of one character to the mind of another.' While Miller draws the conclusion that the meaning of this technique is 'that the solid existing things of the external world unify the minds of separate persons', I would rather like to draw attention to the shifts between internal and external space. The object is placed at the opening of a tunnel as it dives into or resurfaces from a character's mind, and structurally it seems to have the function of reminding the reader of the external world. The objects are given an almost anchoring function, as if they are meant to secure the fluid and flighty world of thoughts and emotions to a world of physical objects, as to insist that it does not all take place in a vacuum. So, though the objects of external space are few, they seem to have a specific function in the narrative. Woolf's statement that "[f]iction is like a spider's web, attached ever so lightly perhaps, but still attached to life at all four corners" (*ROO* 53), that in the context of *ROO* denotes the connection of works of fiction to a reality that is external to them, also may be applied to the internal structure of her own work; the

¹⁷ Auerbach uses the incident of Mrs R measuring the reddish brown stocking against James' leg to describe how the time spent on the action does not match the time spent rendering Mrs R's thoughts in this moment. However, he conceptualizes the incident as a *moment*, that is, an event in narrative *time*, not space (537-9).

internal and personal fictions of each character anchors itself to their external reality, or life, by way of a limited amount of spatial objects.¹⁸

The examination of the opposition between internal and external space is a common approach to the study of Woolf. Janis M. Paul links this differentiation between internal and external space to a demarcation between Victorianism and Modernism. For Paul the opposition between the material world and the world of consciousness in Woolf's writing, is equivalent to the literary manifestation of the opposition between the Victorianism and Modernism that shaped Woolf's life (7). The external world in *TL* is, according to Paul, a materialization of Victorian social norms as well as the form of the Victorian novel. Modernism, on the other hand, appears as the inner world or consciousnesses of the characters. The notion of an inner and an external world is also central to Ellen Tremper's reading of Woolf. But while Paul links each world to the aesthetics of a distinct literary period, Tremper links Woolf's treatment of the inner and external to a "Romantic conflation of consciousness and world" (23). In Woolf's books she finds, among other things, a Romantic incentive to "discover the 'self' and then to reveal it to her readers" (30). Internal space becomes the nature of being, and converting it into externality is, according to Tremper, one of the main concerns in Woolf's oeuvre.

For Paul and Tremper Woolf's treatment of narrative space seems to translate into abstract or material structures governing either the self (consciousness) or the world (social norms and historical conditions). The inner and external worlds which Paul outlines do not correspond to the notion of inner and external space when regarded simply spatially. Though she deems the external world material, she seems rather to be speaking of a world in the abstract sense of the word, as a construct of historical and social norms. Spatially speaking, this does not apply to the world of objects, that is, the physical space which surrounds the characters in an imaginary narrative world. Tremper takes external objects into consideration. Still, she rather looks for the importance of the external world to the 'self' and the nature of being a 'self', than attempting an actual consideration of objects that can be seen and observed in Woolf's texts. I will return to Paul and Tremper's ideas in Chapter Three, where the influence of earlier literary periods becomes relevant as an intertextual relation.

So, then, the sand-hills and the reddish-brown stocking function as tunnel openers into the minds of the characters; they are placed in the overlap of internal and external space.

¹⁸ I am not proposing that this is the actual meaning of this quotation, rather I am a suggestion that it may function as a metaphor for a certain aspect of Woolf's work as well.

While Mrs R is absentmindedly looking at the stocking, seemingly without any awareness of the direction of her thoughts when the narrative dives into the tunnel, Mr Bankes is perfectly aware of the effect the sand-hills are having on his line of thought: “Mr Bankes was alive to things which would not have struck him had not those sand-hills revealed to him the body of his friendship [with Mr Ramsay]” (21). Nonetheless, the placement of an object at the shift from external to internal space is the same for them both. Structurally the objects fill the function of guiding the narrative between external and internal space, and consequently from the internal space of one character to another. Several other objects also appear in the narrative, and become points structuring narrative movements in space. For instance Lily’s painting, to which I will return later, recurs throughout the novel and connects thoughts and ideas in the novel pertaining to art. Another object which occupies an important position in the narrative is the dining-room table. Towards the end of TW the characters gather around the dining-room table to enjoy a meal of *boeuf en daube* (68-90). The table becomes the incentive to intensification of the social relations that have been outlined earlier. The narrative drifts from perspective to perspective showing us the view from each point in space. The table, and the other spatial elements, order the narrative structurally.

Though the objects in question seem to play an important part structurally, they are seldom described or given any specific traits or qualities. The objects are not important to the narrative because of their qualities in creating a scene or a landscape in which the story can take place; they do not create a background in front of which one may imagine the characters moving about. The table and the stocking do not seem to be there for the sake of being a background. Frederik Tygstrup stresses that literary space does not make its primary impact because of its function as a setting or description: “The *description* of space is among the least significant ways of portraying space in literature. ... [T]he significance of space for the literary image and the experience of literature does not correlate to the amount of described space in a text” (185)¹⁹. Rather, it is the construction of space, or how the text creates its own space, which is the primary reason for literature’s appeal. The characteristic spatial properties of TW create a transparent room that may not pay much attention to the visual details of external space, but the way its space is structured opens for an alternative experience of space. The way in which the characters’ internal spaces are structured, has consequences for how they are perceived. Since they are often portrayed by the space that is created within them,

¹⁹ “Rum-beskrivelsen er blandt de mindst betydningsfulde måder at fremstille rum på i litteraturen. ... [R]ummets betydning for det litterære billede og den litterære erfaring har ingen relation til omfanget av det beskrevne rum i en tekst” (185).

characterization becomes a spatial matter. The visual characteristics of the narrative, for instance how spatial objects are focalized by characters, effects the shaping of these characters. But how does the construction of narrative space affect the characters and the story they act out? How do spatial elements create meaning? In the next section I will consider Mr Ramsay's placement in narrative space and how the experience of space shapes him as a character.

Spatial Characterization: Mr Ramsay on the Terrace

The first time Mr Ramsay appears in *TL* he is "stopping in front of the drawing-room window" (7). The second time he appears²⁰ he is sharing an evening walk with Charles Tansley "up and down, up and down the terrace" (8). This terrace is adjacent to the drawing-room window, and the story space widens horizontally along it, and the the window. Mr R's movements up and down the terrace create a contrast to the static placement of Mrs R and James in the drawing room. Though the terrace is only referred to once in the first chapter, it reoccurs several times throughout the novel. The second reference to the terrace also occurs in relation to Mr R, but now with Mrs R as focalizer: "One moment more, with her head raised, she listened, ... hearing something rhythmical, ... in the garden, as her husband beat up and down the terrace, something between a croak and a song" (17). The terrace appears at several points in the opening chapters of the novel. Most of these occurrences take place in connection with Mr R's movements around in the landscape that makes up the novel's world of things. Mr R spends the better part of the first part of the novel walking on the terrace, and his introductory musings on his own personal and academic achievements (Chapter 6) take place while he is walking on it.

The terrace may not have the obvious importance of the window and the lighthouse, but owing to the fact that Mr R spends much of the first part of *TW* on the terrace, and also as it is placed beside (spatially, and sometimes textually) the drawing-room window, which makes it adjacent to the object that functions as primary structural element of this part of the novel, I would like to suggest that the terrace also has a structural key position, and is in fact one of the structural key elements of the novel, especially in relation to the Mr Ramsay character. The image of the terrace becomes linked with Mr R and establishes a space where the characterization of him can take place. The idea of characterization as a matter that can

²⁰ Appears in external space, that is, for he is a focalized object when James is the focal character in the opening of the novel.

also be spatial is an assumption that I will put to the test in the remainder of this text. I will return to the characterization of Mr R repeatedly throughout this chapter and the next, yet I will also introduce similar spatial characterizations from *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Waves*. I will centre my attention on Chapter 6 because this is the first incident in the novel where Mr R becomes the focal character, and consequently lays down some guidelines regarding how we come to understand this character.

The terrace also figures near Mr R in a case when he is not actually on it. In Chapter 4 the focalizer function is filled mainly by Lily Briscoe and Mr Bankes, and Mr R is focalized by them: “They turned the way the starlings flew, *over the terrace*. Following the scatter of swift-flying birds in the sky they stepped through the gap in the high hedge straight into Mr Ramsay, who boomed tragically at them” (24, my emphasis). On the level of the imaginary world of things Mr R is not, in this case, connected to the terrace, he is placed beside the hedge. On the textual surface or the linear sequence that makes up the text, however, the placement of the terrace is close to the placement of Mr R. The repetition of this spatial reference seems to place him at a certain point in space in TW. After the intermission made up by TP, when the family returns to the summer house, Mr R finds himself on the terrace yet again: “There he was, marching up and down the terrace in a rage” (121). On the very first page of L Mr R is placed in the exact same spot where he spent most of TW. This seems to indicate that nothing has changed. That it is all the same, and that the issues and questions addressed in TW, in spite of all the years that have passed in the mean time, are not resolved.

The terrace also makes itself known in Chapter 6. This chapter is structured around the Mr Ramsay-Mrs Ramsay relationship. The chapter is a short one and primarily deals with Mr R and his feelings of failure, but also shows us what Mrs R sees when looking at her husband. The focal character is Mrs R in the beginning of the chapter, while the last pages are seen through Mr R’s eyes. The last half of the chapter finds Mr R back again on the terrace, after the encounter with Mr Bankes and Lily Briscoe by the hedge. He smokes his pipe, muses on the nature of his legacy and whether he will be remembered after his death, and he successively returns to the drawing room window through which he can see Mrs R and James. While the window, presumably placed in a wall, forms a vertical plane that is two-dimensional like a painting, the adjoining terrace creates a space that is three-dimensional where-in there can be placed additional objects. However, the only object that is placed in this space, not counting Mr R and his pipe, is a stone urn: “Here, stopping for one moment by the stone urn which held the geraniums ... he saw ... his wife and son” (30). This urn is placed in

such a way that Mr R passes it on his walk away from the window where he has spoken to his wife and child, and most of his musings take place while he is standing next to it. In fact the urn is mentioned five times within the last two pages of the chapter, and makes up a central part in its imagery.

An urn placed on a terrace is a motif that occurs in several of Woolf's works, and it may also be understood as the representation of a real life phenomenon. In the Introduction to the 2008 Oxford Edition of *TL*, David Bradshaw remarks on the similarities between the urns described in the novel and the urns mentioned in one of Woolf's journal entries from 1905. Woolf and her siblings visited Carbis Bay near St Ives and the entry entails a description of her memories of Talland House,²¹ the house in which they spent their summers as children: "There was the house, with its two windows; there on the terrace were the stone urns, against the bank of the tall flowers" (*EJ* 282). Since *TL* can be regarded as a fictionalization of Woolf's relation to and feelings for her deceased parents and most of the scenery in the novel has its real life original in St Ives,²² the urn that Mr R passes on his walk on the terrace can be read as a mere representation of the visual surroundings that Woolf remembered and envisioned while writing the novel. Still, the urn occurs in other of her novels than *TL*, novels that do not hold the same relation to a real situation as *TL*, and which are not regarded as representations of real life to the same extent as *TL* is. So while this urn very well might be the fictional representation of the urns on the terrace of Talland House, the urn has also become a literary motif that must not necessarily be considered merely as a representation.

Another of Woolf's works where the urn figures, is *Mrs Dalloway*. Here the urn appears in the main character Clarissa's memories of her feelings for Sally Seton. When the middle aged Clarissa returns from purchasing flowers for her party the following evening, her thoughts go to her youth when Sally came to stay at Bourton. This passage (*MD* 28-31) is introduced, rather abruptly, by Clarissa bringing up her love for women: "But this question of love ... this falling in love with women. Take Sally Seton; her relation in the old days with Sally Seton" (28). Her lesbian predilection is exemplified by her feelings for Sally, and the passage ends in the description of Sally kissing Clarissa: "they all went out onto the terrace and walked up and down. ... Then came the most exquisite moment of her whole life passing a stone urn with flowers in it. Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips" (30).

²¹ The Stephens family spent their summers at Talland House, St Ives when Virginia Woolf was a child. However, the particular incident that this diary entry describes, is from when they came back to visit several years later and stayed at Carbis Bay.

²² The novel is set in the Hebrides, though the inspiration for the scenery came from Cornwall (Bradshaw xxvii).

In *The Waves* there is an urn that occurs in the section where the six characters, or voices, visit Hampton Court. An urn is mentioned already in the first paragraph: “pictures rise — summer afternoons, boats, old ladies holding their skirts up, one urn in winter, some daffodils in March” (*W* 175). But it is not until the last five pages of this section that the urn becomes central to the imagery. The six friends are walking in the gardens, and conversation topics range from death and love, to the perishability of mankind:

You and I, Rhoda, stop for a moment by this stone urn. ... We have sacrificed the embrace among the ferns, and love, love, love by the lake, standing, like conspirators who have drawn apart to share some secret, by the urn. ... The southern sun flickers over this urn; we push off in to the tide of the violent and cruel sea. ... Let us pace the terrace by the river almost alone. (*W* 191-4)

Though this urn is placed on a terrace overlooking a river, and not on the terrace of a summer house, as in *MD* and *TL*, the place it takes in these passages seems similar. The urn, as focalized object, is not described in any of these cases; the only explication of its visual characteristics is that it is made of stone and holds flowers, and in *TL* it is also given a handle made of a ram’s horn. Though the urn is present in the narrative as a focalized object, the lack of description of it is striking, especially considering Woolf’s overall richness in language when characterizing and describing. The urn is simply there, as a presence. The lack of description of the urn and the fact that it just seems to be there, creates a presence that is textual rather than visual. The word ‘urn’ recurs in the text, even if the image of the urn created in the reader’s mind is not necessarily predominant. The exact details of the urn’s visual characteristics are not stressed, though the word ‘urn’ reoccurs in the texts of *W* and *TL*. J. Hillis Miller writes of recurring themes and motifs as a method of creating meaning in novels: “An author may repeat in one novel motifs, themes, characters, or events from his other novels. ... A novel is interpreted in part through the noticing of such recurrences” (*FR* 2). The recurrence of the urn in several of Woolf’s novels is an incentive to investigate closer what this motif entails, and the meanings it might produce.

The urn in *W*, though it is also placed on a terrace, seems to have a very different function than in *TL* and *MD*. The scene described in *MD*, with the main character passing a stone urn placed on a terrace, is quite similar to Mr R’s walk on the terrace in *TL*. In both novels the urn also occurs in association with tunnels. Bonnie Kime Scott deems this first tunnel digging behind Clarissa in *MD* as “the best illustration of the tunnelled moment” (16) in all of Woolf’s novels. The narrator (and the reader) follows Clarissa’s line of thought back

into her past and to this most exquisite moment of Sally's kiss. The urn appears at precisely this moment, seconds before Clarissa resurfaces from the tunnel and goes on to consider what her old beau Peter Walsh will think of her now, in the narrative present, her being older and marked by illness. According to Jane de Gay this incident in *MD* marks a change in the way Woolf constructs her narratives. De Gay notes how Woolf struggled with the idea of the courtship novel when writing her first two novels. Both of her novels *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day* explore the traditional courtship narrative, and the problems of narratively uniting a man and a woman. *VO* can be read as *Bildungsroman*, or a story of the education of a young woman and the difficulties she faces when trying to relate to men,²³ while *ND* explicitly deals with the problems of love and marriage and how they do not necessarily coexist. In *MD* (Woolf's fourth novel), however, the tunnelling into Clarissa's memories of her past and this character's memories of both Peter Walsh and her friend Sally Seton, becomes an insistence "that it is possible to exist in different states, ... Clarissa may be a virgin, wife and mother" (89). Since Clarissa Dalloway is happily married, but still deals with Sally and Peter in her thoughts, the traditional courtship narrative is destabilized. In other words, Clarissa's memories of her lesbian love affair resist the imperative of the marriage narrative, and the tunnel into her past becomes a narrative tool when conveying this resistance.²⁴ The moment when Sally kisses Clarissa by the urn is the climax of Clarissa's first dive into her past, and therefore makes up a key moment in *MD*. This specific tunnel outlines Clarissa and reveals an important issue which can lead to defining her as a character.

In *TL* the urn also occurs in relation with a tunnel, or perhaps in this case, a cave. The urn is the only spatial element belonging to external space that appears while Mr R is focalizer in Chapter 6.²⁵ The whole section is made up of tunnels or caves containing his thoughts and feelings. But rather than being a part of the tunnel itself, the urn marks the opening of a tunnel, or the resurfacing of one. Similar to the function of the reddish-brown stocking for Mrs R and the sand-hills for Mr Bankes, the urn marks the narrative return to external space. In *MD* the urn is placed in the tunnel, as an object of Clarissa's internal space. The nature of Clarissa's tunnel also differs from Mr R's tunnels. The first tunnel in *MD* is a

²³ Also in Beer (*AP*). However, though *VO* can be considered as a *Bildungsroman* it should be noted that the education of the main character Rachel Vinrace does end in death. The novel may have similarities in structure with the *Bildungsroman*, but the death of the main character prevents any final placement in this genre.

²⁴ Scott notes that in *VO* the tunnel functions as a nightmare to Rachel Vinrace. Conversely, the tunnel in *MD* has become a resource for Clarissa.

²⁵ I will quote abundantly from this passage in Chapter Three, and hope my readers will excuse me for not doubling the quotations by introducing them all here as well.

deep one in the sense that it goes far back into the past. It also lasts over several pages of text. Conversely, the tunnel in *TL*, which Woolf has dug out behind Mr R, does not lead to the past, but to Mr R's current thoughts and feelings. His internal space temporally coincides with external space. Clarissa's tunnel tunnels back to another point in time, creating a tension between internal and external space which is not only spatial, but temporal. This diverging temporality also seems to have an effect on the depth of the tunnels. Mr R's tunnel seems to be a tunnel that does not lead very far down beneath the ground, and that resurfaces several times – perhaps it is more like a cave – while Clarissa's tunnel is deep and spans over several pages.

Woolf's method of playing objects up against the notion of internal and external space, or consciousness and world, has received some critical attention. Charles Schug reads Woolf's treatment of objects into a context of Romantic poetry. In the book *Romantic Genesis of the Modern Novel* (1979) Schug claims that Woolf is influenced by the ideas of Romantic poets. One of the major themes in *TL* happens to coincide with one of the major themes in Romantic poetry, namely the Romantic lyrical self's wish to become one with the object: "Woolf too seeks to blur the distinction between subject and object to get at the world behind both object and subject" (195). In *TL* Schug uses the examples of Mrs R and Lily to explain how Woolf achieves this effect. Mrs R possesses a consciousness which is capable of merging with the external object, or that which Tremper deemed the 'Romantic conflation of consciousness and world'. Lily, on the other hand, when painting Mrs R, seeks to become one with her. In the continuation of this idea of conflation, the urn and the reddish-brown stocking seem to function in a similar way. Though they both can be considered *objects* and not *subjects* or *selves*, the world that opens up behind them is the world of the subjects or the selves. That is, the objects open up a world behind the selves, Mrs R and Mr R. The objects also mark the narrative tunnelling into the internal spaces of these characters. The conflation of subject and object, or consciousness and world, is reached by the placement of external objects in the consciousnesses of the subjects, while they still remain external objects. The world behind the subject unfolds for the subject, while looking at the external object, and the object becomes a part of the subject's inner world. I will return to some of these ideas in Chapter Three. For the present, I will concentrate on what happens when the focalized object in question happens to be an object of art. The remainder of this chapter will be an investigation of Lily's painting as an effort at transforming Mrs R into an art object.

The Art Object: Lily's Painting

Lily's painting is another external object that structures the narrative of *TL*. It is brought into the story by way of Mrs R, just before an alteration where the focal character shifts from Mrs R to Lily. Mrs R remembers that she is posing for a picture: "she was supposed to be keeping her head as much in the same position as possible for Lily's picture" (17). Here the picture functions in a similar way as the urn and the reddish-brown stocking; it marks a spatial shift from internal space (Mrs R's) to external space, and back into internal space, but this time Lily's. Yet, it is not purely as a spatial object that the picture seems to have its greatest impact on the structure, but rather by its special position as an object of art.

As I mentioned in the Introduction, Woolf had doubts about whether it should be Lily or Mr R who closed the novel. While she regarded Mr R reaching the lighthouse as one possible ending, Lily finishing her painting must be a part of the conclusion as well. Both the lighthouse and the painting seemed to have such a structural significance that it would be problematic to leave either of them out. When discussing the meaning of the lighthouse with Roger Fry²⁶, Woolf maintained that the lighthouse was not a symbol, and the boats that reach the lighthouse rocks in the next penultimate chapter were not allegoric or symbolic of a deeper message which could be the key to the novel's meaning. Rather she described the Lighthouse as a "central line down the middle of the book" (Letters 385); it is an object that structures the material that Woolf wished to engage with. Though concerns of the lighthouse open the novel, by James' wish to go there, it is not this object that concludes it. The penultimate chapter ends with Mr R, Cam and James springing on to the lighthouse rocks (*TL* 169), and the 'line down the middle' is brought to an end here. However, the last chapter is dedicated to Lily Briscoe and her picture, and the last sentence of the novel reads: "Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision" (170). Lily struggles to complete her painting of Mrs R and James throughout the novel and it recurs in the external story space quite often. If the lighthouse is a 'central line', then perhaps the painting is a parallel line, or a crossing line in the structure of the book.

Above I have regarded the lighthouse, and other objects, as purely spatial objects, that is, examined the way they function in a space that is visual, rather than textual. In this respect, the lighthouse as an object must be given special attention, owing to its presence in the title

²⁶ The interrelationship between Roger Fry's ideas and Virginia Woolf's writing has been thoroughly explored. The purpose of these pages is not so much an exploration of this relationship, as an attempt to use Fry to make explicit some of the ideas of art that Woolf deals with in *TL*. I have used Koppen (2001), Scott (1995) and McLaurin (1973) for background information on their common ideas.

and the last intertitle. Even an unskilled reader would have a hard time missing the central position the lighthouse is given. The painting does not occupy such a prominent position, yet it certainly contributes to the structuring of the novel, though perhaps on a different level. The remaining section of this chapter will be a discussion of the painting's structural position, as an art object, as well as an investigation of the material in the novel that deals with aesthetic ideas and the nature of art.

One of the functions the painting has in the novel is as a point of departure for certain topics regarding the creation of art, as well as the thoughts and feelings that may occur for the artist during this process. The alteration between Mrs R and Lily, where the picture is brought into the story space for the first time, is also accompanied by Lily's feelings of shortcoming when trying to create a work of art. She struggles to transform her vision into tangible shapes and colours on the canvas: "It was in that moment's flight between the picture and her canvas that the demons set on her who often brought her to the verge of tears and made this passage from conception to work as dreadful as any down a dark passage for a child" (19). In the last paragraph of the novel, when Lily is on the verge of finishing her painting, she figures her work will be "hung in the attics, ... it would be destroyed" (170). The passage brings to light the conversion of vision into work, and the artist's anxiety of completing the work, because she must give up her control over it and give it up to other people's judgement. Lily's picture, then, creates a starting point for thematizing the complicated process of artistic creation.

The painting also instigates a discussion of the nature of art. Mr Bankes is intrigued by Lily claiming that her painting is of James and Mrs R, because he finds it hard to understand how she has "reduced [them] to a purple shadow without irreverence" (45). His own prejudices, he explains, are on the other side: "The largest picture in his drawing-room ... was of the cherry trees in blossom on the banks of the Kennet. He has spent his honeymoon on the banks of the Kennet" (45). The cherry trees, as opposed to the purple shadow, seem to imply the view of art as something that is in some way representational of the real world. Real objects, the cherry trees, are represented in art, and the artwork becomes a reference to the real world. When Lily paints the human shapes of Mrs R and James as a purple shadow, and Mr Bankes finds this intriguing, this seems to be because he regards artworks as representations of reality. Nevertheless, in her conversation with Mr Bankes, Lily calls attention to the fact that "the picture was not *of* them" (45, my emphasis). James and Mrs R are rather considered the recipients of tribute, because "a picture must be a tribute" (45). They are not simply being 'reduced ... to a purple shadow', as Mr Bankes considers them to be.

This discussion, though quite simple in structure, entails a reflection upon art which is quite complex.

The complexities regarding the art object are closely interlaced with Roger Fry's essays on art. Lily expresses her views on the nature of creation of art in the almost banal phrase: "A light here required a shadow there" (45). Though this sentence seems almost childlike in its simplicity, it entails a view of art which opposes that of Mr Banks. The fact that a light here *requires* a shadow there, reveals a mode of creating art that does not rely on realistic representation. In Fry's collected essays *Vision and Design* he describes the tendency in Modern art toward "the re-establishment of purely aesthetic criteria in place of the criterion of conformity to appearance – the rediscovery of the principles of structural design and harmony" (19). Lily seems to subscribe to this view of art, where aesthetic form and the work's internal structure are primary to the shape's relation to any real thing. The light, which is an element within the work, requires a shadow, which is another, but they do not require an object in reality which they are imitating or referring to. Though the painting, strictly speaking, may be a depiction, the shape of the figures on the canvas become the prime motivation for the mode of composition.

A third issue which is addressed by the discussion of Lily's painting as its point of departure, is the intricate correlation between the work of art, the object it often attempts to portray, and the concept of beauty. The work of art is first and foremost Lily's picture, though there are other events in the novel which touch upon the act of artistic creation as well. The objects being portrayed are, in this case, Mrs R and James, while the concept of beauty is primarily emphasised in relation to Mrs R. Mrs R is frequently described as a beautiful woman, in fact, a considerable portion of Chapter 5 is devoted to the discussion of her beauty and its impact on the people around her:

But was it nothing but looks? people said. What was there behind it — her beauty, her splendour? Had he blown his brains out, they asked, had he died the week before they were married — some other, earlier lover, of whom rumours reached one? Or was there nothing? nothing but an incomparable beauty which she lived behind, and could do nothing to disturb? For easily though she might have said at some moment of intimacy ... she never spoke. She was silent always. (26-7)

There can be no questioning of Mrs R's beauty. To Charles Tansley "she was the most beautiful person he had ever seen" (15). Mr Banks words it slightly more poetically: "Nature has but little clay, ... like that of which she moulded you'. ... Greek, blue-eyed,

straight-nosed” (27). Her beauty is both a sensuous beauty, one which perhaps has caused a young man to take his own life. Still it is also an aesthetic beauty, a beauty that is likened to the artistic venture of moulding clay into sculpture, and the classic beauty of the Greeks. Lily’s painting, though it is not strictly speaking a representation of Mrs R, meaning that Lily does not strive to create a portrait of her that is conform to her appearance, it at least connotes Mrs R’s form to an aesthetic form, and to an object of art. The tension which arises between Mrs R considered as a beautiful person, and Mrs R considered as a beautiful object of art, creates a space where the investigation of the transformation of an object into an art object can take place. Consequently, questions on the nature of art and beauty surface: What distinguishes the art object from the plain object? How does the concept of beauty make way for the transformation of objects into art?

Roger Fry discusses the various uses of the term *beauty*. On the one hand beauty is applied to objects with a sensuous charm; this is the meaning of the term one would use when describing a beautiful person or a beautiful flower. On the other hand, objects which are extremely ugly can be perceived as beautiful when they are presented as objects of art. Therefore, there is another meaning to the word *beauty* that goes beyond sensual pleasure: “Beauty in the former sense belongs to works of art where only the perceptual aspect of the imaginative life is exercised, beauty in the second sense becomes as it were supersensual, and is concerned with appropriateness and intensity of the emotions aroused” (33-4). What is beautiful can be pleasing purely to the perceptual portion of ‘imaginative life’, in other words sensual and pleasing to the senses. However, it can also be pleasing in a way that goes beyond this sensual pleasure in a way that relates to aesthetic perception. Beauty understood in this last sense, can be applied also to ugly objects, as they still may have properties that make them pleasing to the aesthetic feelings. They may have what Fry names “appropriateness” or “purposeful order” (33).

Mrs R is described as being beautiful in the first sense of the word. She has a beauty that gives her a special allure in the social world. Still, the external beauty she possesses creates speculation of what is behind this beauty; what are the internal properties which are considered as correlating with the external properties regarded as beautiful features? The inclusion of the jilted lover in the discussion of her beauty also consolidates the image of her beauty as sensual. When focalized by Lily Briscoe, on the other hand, Mrs R’s beauty is not limited to sensual beauty:

[Mrs Ramsay] was unquestionably the loveliest of people (bowed over her book); the best perhaps; but also, different too from the perfect shape which one saw there. But why different, and how different? she asked herself How did she differ? What was the spirit in her, the essential thing, by which, had you found a crumpled glove in the corner of a sofa, you would have known it, from its twisted finger, hers indisputably? (42)

The image of Mrs R here becomes subject to an aesthetic transformation and a scrutiny regarding the properties of beauty and art. Lily finds that Mrs R is ‘different ... from the perfect shape’ which one perceives when looking at her; though the perfect shape *is* her, she is also different from this shape. There is something else that Lily is looking for when she sees Mrs R, something which somehow is more *her* than her perfect shape. And this something is ‘the essential thing’ to Mrs R’s being. Later Lily’s thoughts on the subject take a different turn: “Was it wisdom? Was it knowledge? Was it, once more, the *deceptiveness of beauty*, so that all one’s perceptions, half way to truth, were tangled in a golden mesh? or did she lock up within her some secret[?]” (43, my emphasis). Mrs R’s sensual beauty here becomes an obstacle to Lily’s attempt at finding what lies behind it, the ‘essential thing’. Perhaps Lily’s difficulty regarding the transformation of Mrs R into art pertains to the nature of Mrs R’s beauty: If her beauty diverts perception into a ‘golden mesh’, then the ‘essential thing’ will always stay hidden and be impossible to perceive. This reading coincides with Charles Schug’s assertion that Woolf, like the Romantic poets, seeks to get at the world behind the object. Lily seeks to find what is behind Mrs R and to transform this essence or idea of her into art. However, Lily’s difficulty at finding the ‘essential thing’ in Mrs R could also pertain to the fact that there is no such thing as an essence, and beauty is all there is. In this case Lily’s project of finding the essence is impossible and completing the picture is either unattainable or involves a compromise regarding the transformation of the object into art. Lily cannot transform something that does not exist into art; however, if she gives up the search for the essential thing, she might be able to convey Mrs R’s beauty.²⁷

For Lily Mrs R is a ‘perfect shape’, but transforming this shape into a shape that can make up a part of her picture, is not so easily done. Lily does not complete her picture until the very last page of the novel, a point in story time ten years after her previous try at it in the first part of the novel. The difficulties she encounters when attempting to transform Mrs R, can also be explained by her chosen method of creating. For her a painting ‘must be a tribute’, it is not a picture *of* Mrs R. Mr Bankes objection to her picture “that no one could tell it for a

²⁷ I will return to this question in Chapter Three.

human shape” (45) shows that she has no intention of trying to give a lifelike representation of Mrs R’s beauty. But what is it then that she is trying to put down on her canvas? Is it this ‘essential thing’ or this *something* which lies behind? Considering Fry’s two uses of the term *beauty* for a moment, it seems as if the sensual beauty that adheres to Mrs R is what is working against Lily’s transformation of her into art. If the aesthetic beauty that Fry describes is supersensual and rather an experience of ‘purposeful order’ and ‘appropriateness’ than sensual pleasure, perhaps Mrs R’s sensual beauty, which leaves one’s perceptions in a ‘golden mesh’, is blocking the way for Lily’s creative transformation; Lily cannot transform Mrs R into art, and into an aesthetically pleasing shape, before she can see past Mrs R’s sensually pleasing beauty. This may also explain why Lily is not able to complete the picture until Mrs R is deceased. While nearness to Mrs R always entails a perceptual mesh, the removal of her sensual beauty allows Lily to understand, and articulate visually, that which can be regarded as the essential Mrs R. Or perhaps quite the opposite: The removal of the physical presence of Mrs R allows Lily to see that in fact there was only beauty, and the secret that one took as lying behind it was only a result of the deceptiveness of beauty. Either way, the object of art is completed only when the object it is portraying no longer exists; Mrs R is no longer a spatial object in the story space of the novel, only as an art object does she prevail spatially. In a sense the art object comes to replace the real object in the external story space of the novel.

Lily Briscoe is not the only character to attempt to transform Mrs R into an art object. Mrs R functions as a focalized object for both Mr Bankes and Mr R as focalizers, and they both see her somewhat like an art object. Mr Bankes’ compliment to Mrs R that ‘nature has but little clay ... like that of which she moulded you’ alludes to the action of creating and sculpting, and renders Mrs R some sort of object of art created by nature as artist. In fact the transformation of real life objects into, if not art, then at the least something which resembles it, is a technique Woolf employs rather often. Allen McLaurin names this technique *framing*, after the way Woolf literally or metaphorically places frames around objects, views and characters to encourage a different way of seeing them: “A frame takes the scene out of the sphere of possible action, and therefore removes us from the everyday instinctive vision which is dominated by practical purpose” (51). This framing technique, McLaurin claims, is inspired by Roger Fry’s description of the mirror image as a basic form of aesthetic perception:

The frame of the mirror, then, does to some extent turn the reflected scene from one that belongs to our actual life into one that belongs rather to the imaginative life. The

frame of the mirror makes its surface into a very rudimentary work of art, since it helps us to attain to the artistic vision. (Fry 25)

Art objects and regular objects are distinguished by the way they function in perception of them. In real life we do not actually *see* objects, we only take in the few traits and qualities that are required for our purpose; our perception economizes with impressions to the extent that we do not really see what we are looking at. Art objects require a different kind of perception, that of our imaginative life. According to Fry “[i]t is only when an object exists in our lives for no other purpose than to be seen that we really look at it” (Fry 29). According to McLaurin, the framing of Mrs R is done, for one, by the gilt picture frame which is placed behind her. Lily also frames her, first, by painting her within the frame of her canvas, and second, by looking at her through the window frame. These framing incidents all contribute to the transformation of Mrs R into something different: “She is no longer simply Mrs Ramsay, she is cut off from the practical world and transfigured into something like the painting of the Mother and Child” (McLaurin 195).

Though McLaurin does not mention it, Mr R also performs an act of framing on the image of his wife. When he is walking past the stone urn on the terrace and considering his life and work, he pauses to look at Mrs R and James through the drawing-room window:

[A]s one raises one's eyes from the page in an express train and sees a farm, a tree, a cluster of cottages as an illustration, a confirmation of something on the printed page to which one returns, fortified and satisfied, so ... the sight of them fortified him and satisfied him and consecrated his effort to arrive at a perfectly clear understanding of the problem which now engaged his splendid mind. ... Here, stopping for one moment by the stone urn which held the geraniums, he saw, but now far away, like children picking up shells, divinely innocent and occupied with trifles at their feet and somehow entirely defenceless against a doom which he perceived, his wife and son, together, in the window. They needed his protection; he gave it them. (30)

The framing of Mrs R seems to serve a different function when Mr R is focalizer, than when Lily is focalizer. When Lily is focalizer the framing is an attempt to find the ‘essential thing’ behind Mrs R’s beauty, while when Mr R is focalizer the frame he places around Mrs R seems to bring forth something entirely different. For Mr R his wife and child are ‘like children picking up shells, divinely innocent and occupied with trifles’, they need his protection, and this he willingly gives, but still the sight of them leaves him ‘fortified and satisfied’. The framing here does not seem to cut them off from reality in an attempt to see them as they really are, but rather in an attempt to confirm that they are what he already

knows, or wishes, them to be. The cottage and the trees in the quotation above serve as an analogy for how the image of Mrs R and James functions for Mr R. The same way in which the trees serve as an illustration of the page that one happens to be reading at the time, Mrs R and James serve as illustration of what Mr R happens to be thinking at the time. Though the image and the thought cannot have any relation to each other, other than in the mind of the one who is connecting the two, Mrs R and James, as focalized object, serve as a confirmation of what Mr R is thinking at the moment he sees them. The connection between his thoughts and the objects he is seeing may be no more correlated with one another than the trees one sees when looking out of a train window are related to what one happens to be reading at the time. The framing action here is not one of cutting out the objects from the practical world, as McLaurin puts it, but rather a transformation of them into something that fits the practical world of one person, Mr Ramsay. In Fry's terms one could say that Lily's framing is an approach to the art object as an object that one can 'really look at' to look for the qualities which one would not notice when seeing the object in real life. Mr R's framing entails only what he already knows or wishes he will see: He raises his eyes from the metaphorical page and sees them as a 'confirmation' of what he already knows. He does not 'really look at' the objects, but sees them as he expects and needs to see them, and the way he already believes that they are.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has been a consideration of the spatial structure of *To the Lighthouse*. I have considered the space/time duality and examined how the passage of time seems to become a spatial element. The attention to external space in TP is what conveys the passage of time. In the other two parts of the novel the narrative deals primarily with the characters' internal space, rather than the external space which surrounds them. This creates a narrative world that is transparent, and where the few objects that do figure seem to be given more meaning. Woolf's dealing with narrative space has been characterized as having similarities with the Romantic idea of conflation between subject and object, consciousness and world.

The attention to internal space causes difficulties as to how to conceptualize the narrator. When regarding the narrator as a *voice*, he seems to be merged with the characters or otherwise dependent on them. Spatially speaking, the narrator's position in the narrative is difficult to find. Where is he positioned? Can his presence in the novel be regarded as spatial?

Comparing *TL* to *The Waves* shows that in *TL* there seems to be a structuring principle present. However, it is perhaps rash to name this principle a narrative *voice*.

The visual structure of the first and last part of *TL* is dominated by the characters' internal space (thoughts and feelings), or what has been named Woolf's tunnelling process. The construction of the characters' internal spaces becomes a mode of characterization. There are certain objects that occur at the surfacing of these tunnels or characterizations, and these contribute to the structuring of the narrative. One of these objects is a stone urn. An urn on a terrace is a recurring image in several of Woolf's novels.

Lily's painting is another object that structures the narrative. Though it does not have the obvious spatial prominence of the lighthouse, it structures the novel by being a centre for ideas in the novel pertaining to art. The picture instigates Mr Bankes' and Lily's discussion on art, where fictionalized versions of views on aesthetics come to light. The painting also functions as a *framing*, that is, it transforms Mrs R into an art object. It also functions as a contrast to Mr R's framing, which can also be regarded as a transformation of Mrs R into art, but in another manner.

Chapter Three: Intertextual Space

Above I have described the objects and visual structure of *To the Lighthouse* as if they were part of an imaginary world. A term such as *imaginary world*, and other narratological terms used in the previous chapter, entails a certain attitude towards the text. Narratology's aim is to unveil the structure of the text, and the meaning of the text therefore becomes secondary. Intertextuality, however, though it is indisputably a structural matter, pays more attention to the texts meanings. The notion of intertextuality refuses the possibility of one specific meaning; as the texts are always generated in relation to other texts, their meaning is always interlocked with a myriad of other continually changing meanings. However, the way in which these meanings are produced leaves a space for finding meaning in the text that goes beyond the restrictions of narrative theory. Nevertheless, this chapter will not entirely leave narrative theory and the notion of the imaginary world behind. It will attempt to open up the text and the imaginary world towards meanings which seemingly lie beyond it. This does not necessarily dismantle the idea of an imaginary world, it merely places this world in a context of other worlds. The opening of the narrative world happens, in the space between the word as denotation and the word as linguistic sign. The objects that figure in the narrative world function on the textual surface as words as well. These words are not only denotations or linguistic representations of physical objects, they also function and relate to each other as elements on the textual surface and as intersections with other textual surfaces. This chapter will be an attempt at combining narrative spatial concerns with intertextual spatial concerns. What meanings can be found in the space between the word as linguistic element and the word as denotation of a narrative object? And how does the word, understood as a linguistic element, draw meaning from other words that have come before?

The Urn

In the previous chapter I described how certain objects function as structural key elements in several of Woolf's novels. The objects are not necessarily given a detailed description, but are given the function of structuring the visual world which becomes the scene that the events of the story can take place in. One of these objects was a stone urn placed on a terrace. We have seen that the exact details of the urn's visual characteristics are not stressed; it is the word 'urn' that reoccurs in certain passages of Woolf's novels, not the description of this object. In

Mrs Dalloway this word occurs in memories Clarissa has of her love for Sally Seton. Spatially speaking, the word ‘urn’ appeared in the first tunnelling into Clarissa’s internal space, and marked a key moment in the novel. In *TL* the word *urn* mainly occurs in Chapter 6, when Mr Ramsay is walking on the terrace and mulling over his feelings of failure. It reoccurs towards the end of the novel, when Mr R is on his way to the lighthouse and looks back at the summer house where he envisions himself walking on the terrace ten years earlier. In *TL* the urn also structures the cave that is dug out behind Mr R; it marks when the narrative dives into Mr R’s thoughts, and also when it resurfaces. In *The Waves* the word ‘urn’ figures in a passage where the six voices are walking at Hampton Court, and similarly to *TL* it is placed on a terrace overlooking water.

The word ‘urn’ plays a different structural part in the creation of the different worlds of things in these three novels. Following the thoughts of Kristeva and Bakhtin one could say that it is a *direct word*. It aims at creating an artistic representation of an object. However, as Bakhtin stresses, the direct denotation of an object is always interrupted by other verbal intentions, and it meets and interweaves with other meanings. Though the real life urns on the terrace of Talland House may have been in Virginia Woolf’s mind when she wrote these passages, direct denotation of these urns is disturbed by other utterances which attach themselves to this one and exist parallel to it. This does not suggest that the urns of Talland House are eradicated from the text, for as Kristeva emphasizes, the word *connotes* the object, and including additional objects as connotations to this word does not eliminate the connection to the real life urns.

Considering the urn’s function as a narrative object, in opposition to its function as word, may lead to differing ideas of what it means. The word ‘urn’ may invoke an image of countless different urns in the imagination of the reader. The urn is never given a detailed description, so the word may connote any of these images in an imaginary world of things. When the word may denote any object, not a specific object, its status as denotation, or direct word, deteriorates; it is hard to consider it as a representation, all the more easy to consider it as a pure word on the textual surface. Ellen Tremper writes of this tension between language as a textual surface and language as a representation of objects. She compares Woolf to Joyce, and one of the points of comparison is their preferences of text or image, and how they differ in their attitude to these in their work. While Tremper finds that Joyce “delights in drawing attention to language, to words as the medium of his art, and so to the textual surface”, Woolf, on the other hand, “prefers to see through [the textual surface] to the created image” (250). To

a certain degree I can agree to this. Woolf certainly does create images, for instance Mrs R thinking of the ‘plateful of blue water’ and Mr Bankes thinking of Mr R commenting on a hen on a road in Westmorland. However, in *TL* these images are images of thoughts and memories, they are not images of the visual world surrounding the characters. The passage of *W* in which the urn occurs is certainly laden with images and metaphors designed to describe these images. But again, the urn is not one of these. It seems rather to be an instance of literality in the otherwise very descriptive and metaphorical text, a point emphasized perhaps by the fact that the urn is made of stone; it is a heavy substance inserted in the otherwise fleeting images and metaphors of this passage. While the metaphorical and visual qualities of the text make up the majority of Woolf’s novel, the urn marks a return to the surface, or to literality, in this passage, in the same way as it marks a return to reality and external space for Mr R’s thoughts in *TL*.

If the word ‘urn’ cannot function as a direct word, perhaps it has the makings of an *ambivalent word*, a word which functions as an intersection between several sign-systems? Are there possibly other sign-systems that rely heavily on the word ‘urn’? As I have mentioned before, the themes dealt with in the section of *W* where the urn is predominant, are death, love, and the flowing tide of time. Paired up with the word ‘urn’ these themes bring to mind another urn, a most famous urn, perhaps the most mentioned urn found in English literature, namely Keats’ “Ode on a Grecian Urn”.²⁸ Obviously, merely mentioning an urn is not enough to establish a connection between the ode and the novel. But the subjects dealt with in this passage are similar to the ones of the ode, and there are other similarities between them as well. Keats is not referred to in this passage, but he does turn up elsewhere in the novel: “‘Now we have received,’ said Louis, ‘... whatever our masters have had to give us. ... The great Doctor ... has dealt out Horace, Tennyson, the complete works of Keats and Matthew Arnold, suitably inscribed. ...’” (*W* 45). Bonnie Kime Scott also remarks on how Rhoda’s vision of her friend Percival in India bears some resemblance to the ode: “Rhoda turns to a more classical scene of a procession worthy of Keats’s Grecian Urn, and probably derived from her reading of the romantic canon. As part of the classical ritual, they ‘deck the beloved with garlands’” (42). Tremper remarks on the “echoes of Keats” in *W*. This echo includes allusions such as Louis’ “I am half in love with the typewriter and the telephone” (*W* 138) alluding to Keats’ “I have been half in love with easeful Death” from the sixth stanza of “Ode to a Nightingale” (Tremper 210), and other allusions to *The Nightingale*, in addition to

²⁸ Keats’ poem is included in the Appendix.

some vaguer resemblances with “Ode to Psyche”. So even if Keats is not explicitly referred to in this section of *W*, it is perhaps an echo of him that is heard in this part of the text.

Tremper’s reading of *W* is a reading aimed at finding Romanticist ideas and allusions, with special attention to the influence on Woolf by William Wordsworth. Scott, on the other hand, provides a reading of some of Woolf’s novels with the word as starting point. Through the politics of language and with particular consideration of Woolf’s attitude to the use of words – their meaning in the novels and their connections to other words – Scott reads the novels with concentration on how the meaning of words becomes a theme in the novels, as well as how single words create connections beyond the borders of the novels. Though Scott does not mention the word ‘urn’, she does remark on the significance of the word ‘ode’ in *MD*. When Septimus Smith is focalizer, his madness is conveyed in different ways, one of them pertaining to the use of words:

The word “time” split its husk; poured its riches over him; and from his lips fell like shells, like shavings from a plane, without his making them, hard, white, imperishable words, and flew to attach themselves to their places in an ode to Time; an immortal ode to Time. (*MD* 59)

Scott deems this passage an attachment to “an established literary form, the ode, [that has] the hard, monumental immortality imagined in Keats’ ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn.’” (14). Though Scott does not elaborate upon the connection, it demonstrates how an exterior text (the ode) can become significant for a primary text (*MD*) through the use of one single word.

The intersection observed by Scott between *MD* and the ode is dependent on one single word. In *W* singular words from the ode seem to be sprinkled all over the section in which the urn is mentioned. The monologues, or perhaps soliloquies, in which the urn occurs, are Louis’ and Rhoda’s “conversation” by the river at Hampton Court. There are nine successive monologues interchanging between Rhoda and Louis, and they centre upon the same subjects and focalize many of the same objects. Though Rhoda and Louis can be regarded as focalizers²⁹ in each of their monologues, there are still similarities between the two characters’ speech. It is as if they are not having a conversation as such, but are both vocalizing the same flow of thoughts. ‘Urn’ is not the only word from the poem that occurs in

²⁹ I will regard the characters as focalizers here, with Rimmon-Kenan’s understanding of the term in mind. It might be argued that these monologues are also examples of focalizations (in Genette’s sense) which alternate between the characters. Nevertheless, since it might also be argued that the whole book is an example of zero focalization (in Genette’s terms, that is, a text that is entirely dependent on voice) I have chosen to keep the analysis of the objects within the narrative world, and use Rimmon-Kenan’s terms.

this flow of thoughts; the words ‘bride’, ‘silken’, ‘age’, ‘song’, ‘tree’, ‘Greece’, ‘sacrifice’, ‘river’ and ‘love’³⁰ also occur in this conversation. Words like ‘tree’, ‘age’ and ‘river’ are common words that are likely to occur on many occasions, especially in a fairly descriptive passage such as this one, a passage which takes place by a river in a park. The words ‘bride’, ‘silken’, ‘Greece’ and ‘sacrifice’, on the other hand, seem to require a more specific occasion. They do not occur in descriptions of the scene, but rather in the metaphors relating to these descriptions. When describing the sounds she hears in the park, Rhoda says: “We hear the beech trees and the birch trees raise their branches as if the bride had let her silken nightdress fall and come to the doorway saying, ‘Open, open’” (192). The first part of this sentence is literal; it describes what Rhoda in fact hears. The second part of the sentence is a metaphorical connotation to these sounds. The image of a bride in a silken nightdress does not seem to be accidental. Though one may imagine the sound of trees in the wind likened to ruffling skirts, connecting this sound specifically to the skirts of a bride’s silken nightdress suggests a motivation for this metaphor other than merely the description of sound. Since the word ‘bride’ is a part of the memorable first line of the ode, “Thou still unravish’d bride of quietness”, and ‘silken’ occurs later in the poem, I would like to suggest that this metaphor not only has the function of describing the sound of trees, but also of referring to Keats’ ode. These words from this section of the novel are ambivalent, and function as an intersection between *W* and “Ode on a Grecian Urn”.

While some of the words mentioned above, like ‘bride’ and ‘silken’, pass between the sign-systems of the ode and the novel without the sentences or paragraph in which they occur having any other similarities with the ode, some of the words are part of sentences or paragraphs that bear other resemblances to the poem. ‘Song’ is one of these words. “What song shall we hear now that these couples have sought the groves, ... Neville, taking Jinny’s little hand ... cries, ‘Love, love’, and she answers, imitating the bird, ‘Love, Love?’ What song do we hear?” (191) says Louis. This paragraph resembles the ode primarily in the first and last sentences’ similarity to some lines of the ode:

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare

 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,

³⁰ In addition to these, the word ‘ravage’ occurs. ‘Ravage’ is not used in the ode, but ‘ravish’ is. Though this is obviously not the same word, they have emerged from the same stem: “ravage: ... Etymology: French, from Middle French, from *ravir* to ravish” (Webster).

For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!
(15-16, 19-20)

In addition to the use of the words 'song' and 'love', here, the paragraph and the second stanza of the ode also share the same image of a couple under the trees, or in a grove. Not only, then, is this passage connected to the ode by the use of similar words, but also through the evocation of similar images. Since Louis is focalizer here, he also seems to take the same position as the lyrical self of the ode, transforming his friends (Neville and Jinny) into images that are similar to those on the urn.

The repetition of the word 'love' in the quotation above also reminds one of another line of the ode: "More happy love! more happy, happy love!" (25). The repetition of the word 'happy' in the ode's third stanza seems to create a rather desperate tone that renders the word ironic. 'Happy' is repeated six times in this stanza, creating the question of whether this happiness actually exist, or if it perhaps is more like wishful thinking by the lyrical self. The lyrical self seems to have a craving for happiness, and this craving shows itself in the repetition of the word 'happy', as if the self continuously must remind himself that happiness can in fact be found on the life on the urn. The same effect is achieved in *W* when the word 'love' is repeated. Louis repeats it four times in the quotation above, and it returns later in the same section: "'For ever,' said Louis, 'divided. We have sacrificed the embrace among the ferns, and love, love, love by the lake, standing, like conspirators who have drawn apart to share some secret, by the urn. ...'" (193). Repeating the word 'love' here is similar to the repeated 'happy' of the ode. Is it in fact love that Louis is referring to, which he sees by the lake, or does the repetition imply the sarcastic put down of love? In the same way as this one word is repeated until the meaning is altered in the poem, the repetition of a word suggests that it changes meaning also in the novel. The intersection between the ode and the novel is expanded to entail not only single words, but also rhetorical techniques.

In this section of *W* there are three levels of attachment to the ode: on the level of the single ambivalent word (the words in addition to the word 'urn' that recur in both poem and novel), on the level of the image (like the image of the couples beneath the trees), and on the level of rhetorical techniques (the repetition of single words until the meaning is altered). The connection between *W* and "Ode on a Grecian Urn" seems fairly strong, and fairly easy to spot. But the urn, and in extension the attachment to the ode, does not play any significant part in the overall imagery of the novel. It is only in this section that it makes an impact; though the urn does recur elsewhere in the novel, it does not have a prominent position in its

imagery. In *To the Lighthouse*, however, though the frequency of the word ‘urn’ is not higher than in *W*, the poem does seem to play a larger part in the novel as a whole. On the level of the single ambivalent word the connection between the ode and *TL* is not as distinct as the connection to *W*. Yet since the urn plays a central part in the imagery of primarily Chapter 6 of *TL*, where we find Mr R walking on the terrace, and the way in which it functions within this imagery has definitive likenesses to the ode, there seems to be justification for considering the intertextual relationship between these two texts as well. Justification can be found in the likeness in function the urns have in the poem and the novel respectively, and also in the position this urn is given in Woolf’s other novels. The connection between *TL* and Romanticism in general, and “Ode on a Grecian Urn” specifically, is what I will engage with in the remaining parts of this chapter.

Romantic Structure

Finding the prospective Romanticism of Woolf’s novels must not necessarily be approached through search for the influence of Romantic thought and Romantic philosophical ideas. Instead of showing how Romantic philosophical ideas or typically Romantic content surfaces in various novels, I would like to focus on how the structure of Romantic poems is similar to the structure of Woolf’s novels. I will argue that fragments of Romantic structure emerge in the structure of *To the Lighthouse*. Romantic ideas emerge in the narrative not only as influence on the content, but also in structural appropriation of Romantic form. Romantic structure, however, does not necessarily coincide with Romantic content, as for instance the discussion of Woolf’s reference to Tennyson’s (definitively a Victorian) poem “The Charge of the Light Brigade” might illustrate. It is not the reference in itself which defines its Romantic form, but its structure. Yet sometimes Romantic form does coincide with Romantic content, as will be exemplified by the continuing discussion of Keats’ “Ode on a Grecian Urn”.

The appropriation of Romantic form seems to happen largely in relation to Mr Ramsay. In the previous chapter the focalizing of Mrs R became the starting point for a discussion of the art object. Mrs R as object is different when seen through the eyes of Lily, as opposed to the eyes of Mr R; the *framing* of Mrs R creates two separate images of her. Lily’s picture, though it does treat Mrs R something like an art object, aims at seeing her as she ‘really is’. Lily tries to find the qualities in Mrs R that one would not recognize in ordinary

everyday life, but rather the qualities which can be converted into art and become a ‘tribute’ to her. Lily dismantles the notion of art as representation in her work by so openly professing that the picture is not *of* Mrs R, it is not a representation. However, when Mr R focalizes Mrs R the situation seems to be quite the opposite. The framed image of James and Mrs R as if they are seen through a train window, is perceived nearly as an art object by Mr R. While Lily Briscoe clearly is creating an artwork out of her vision of Mrs R, Mr R incorporates his art-like vision into his reality. Mr R creates an art-like image of his wife and son that he seems to believe is realistic. He perceives them as ‘children picking up shells’, but this is a perception based on the illustration he himself has created of them, and not on how they ‘really are’. Lily’s and Mr R’s focalizing of Mrs R, as focalized object, become inversions of each other. Mr R creates an art-like object in life, while she creates a life-like shape in art. They can, nonetheless, not be said to truly portray their original.

This first dive into Mr R’s thoughts is a series of several ‘digging out of caves’ or tunnels behind him. In Chapter Two I discussed the spatial implications of these tunnels. The urn is the object that functions as tunnel opener for Mr R’s thoughts in Chapter 6. It marks the switch from internal to external space. The urn becomes Mr R’s visual starting point for considering the position of his philosophical work and whether his fame will last or not: “The geranium in the urn became startlingly visible and, displayed among its leaves, he could see, without wishing it, that old, that obvious distinction between the two classes of men; ... He had not genius; he laid no claim to that” (31). The ‘two classes of men’ are the steady going men whose achievements are made through hard work, set in contrast to the men who obtain their goals effortlessly and brilliantly, the men who have genius. Mr R explores the question of his posthumous reputation, and if the little contribution he has made to philosophy is enough to grant him a name cut in stone. He does not regard himself as a genius, yet he still believes that his work has had a certain impact on the philosophical world. Mr R’s tunnels, then, are filled with worry over his own position, in life as well as death.

Woolf creates a metaphorical space that allows the readers to see into the thoughts of Mr R without him saying a word. The urn, as an object of the external story space, in addition to the way it marks the entry point of a tunnel, creates an illusion of Mr R’s thoughts being almost like spatial elements. His thoughts in this section range from the heroic allusions to

Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade"³¹ to Mr R's almost self-pitying feelings of failure. Mr R doubts that his work will last when he is gone: "In that flash of darkness he heard people saying — he was a failure" (31). In opposition to this, the next moment he mentally takes part in the Battle of the Balaclava: "Someone had blundered. ... Stormed at by shot and shell, boldly we rode and well, flashed through the valley of death, volleyed and thundered — straight into Lily Briscoe and William Bankes" (28).³² This suggests an identification of himself with the heroes of the Battle of the Balaclava; the poem reads 'boldly *they* rode and well', while the novel reads 'boldly *we* rode and well', indicating that Mr R in his mind here is one of the six hundred soldiers.

His participation in the Battle is not restricted to direct quotation of the poem. Later we find him in a situation that is not described in the poem, but which can be regarded as a continuation of the circumstances it describes:

Feelings that would not have disgraced a leader who, now that the snow has begun to fall and the mountain-top is covered in mist, knows that he must lay himself down and die before morning comes, stole upon him, ... he would not die lying down; he would find some crag of rock, and there, his eyes fixed on the storm, trying to pierce the darkness, he would die standing. (31)

While Mr R here no longer is a soldier, but the leader of an expedition, the heroic venture prevails. First he identifies with the soldiers who, because of other men's errors, must ride to their death, that is, he regards himself rather as a martyr. The image of the leader on the mountain-top, however, does not involve the heroic death of a martyr. Since the leader of an expedition has in fact lead his men into the situation which is described, the death of this leader seems to be self-inflicted. For Mr R this death is seemingly still heroic; in the vision he imagines himself facing death standing up, and not lying down, or admitting defeat. These two images, the one of the soldiers riding to their death at the Balaclava and the leader dying on the mountain-top, are spaces that Mr R's tunnel conjoins with. This tunnel, then, structurally provides a space where Mr R's thoughts can be revealed. It also intersects with the textual space of "The Charge of the Light Brigade" and expands into snow clad mountains. A mountain-top and a valley in the Ukraine connect to Mr R and bring with them

³¹ Tennyson wrote the 'Charge' about the Battle of the Balaclava on the 25th of October 1854. Over six hundred soldiers rode to their death during this incident of the Crimean War where an error caused the Brigade to charge in the wrong direction (Ricks 324).

³² Tennyson's poem is included in the Appendix.

meanings that contribute to the characterization of him. The visual spaces, or scenes that are represented by language, communicate with the structural interplay of denotation on the textual surface. The representations of visual space connect through the linguistic denotation of them, and Mr R becomes identified with the hero and the martyr. He connects to the soldiers dying for no reason on the battlefield, and he is likened to a leader that leads his men into death. Both images entail an idealized notion of the hero, and that death is not so frightening, it can be done standing, as long as it is of the heroic kind.

Toward the end of the chapter Mr R emerges from the tunnel and returns to external reality again. His dealings with the idea of the hero and the martyr seem to have provided him with a conclusion concerning his life and work:

Mr Ramsay squared his shoulders and stood very upright by the urn.

Who shall blame him, if, so standing for a moment he dwells upon fame, upon search parties, upon cairns raised by grateful followers over his bones? ... he now perceives by some pricking in his toes that he lives, and does not on the whole object to live, but requires sympathy, and whisky, and someone to tell the stories of his sufferings to at once? ... Who will not secretly rejoice when the hero puts his armour off, and halts by the window and gazes at his wife and son, who very distant at first, gradually come closer and closer, till lips and book and head are clearly before him, though still lovely and unfamiliar from the intensity of his isolation and the waste of the ages and the perishing of the stars, and finally putting his pipe in his pocket and bending his magnificent head before her — who will blame him if he does homage to the beauty of the world? (32)

The gradual emergence from the tunnel, and return to external space, is illustrated by how he sees Mrs R and James, understood as elements of external space, coming gradually closer, or more and more into focus. They are still ‘lovely and unfamiliar’; they still have some of the foreignness about them which his ‘isolation’ in the tunnel has provided. Mr R’s ‘isolation’ also contributes to the image of him as being outside of reality for a moment, in a place where ideas such as ‘the waste of the ages and the perishing of the stars’ have their location. Mr R recognizes that, even if he is not a genius, he still feels he has a right to sympathy from his everyday companions, represented here by his wife and son. However, even though he acknowledges his mediocrity, he brings back with him the image of the hero. In the background we can hear the faint sounds of the Battle of the Balaclava, indicating that Mr R has not quite left behind the idea of himself being a hero. In the question ‘who will not secretly rejoice when the hero puts his armour off’ the people who look up to the hero are also included in the picture. By this incorporation of some sort of viewing (or reading) audience,

his ventures are converted into a story, they remain there as a sort of fiction, though the narrative at this point has returned to external space. The conclusion he has reached when he returns from this place, brings together the matters which are touched upon while in the tunnels. These matters are the question of his genius, of his posthumous reputation, and last, the question of his relations to his family. Mr R returns from his musings, and the exploration of the tunnels, with a conclusion and a reassurance that he cannot be blamed for his choices in life. Though he will never be a hero falling on the battlefield, other than in his mind, to bend his head before Mrs R is quite as large an accomplishment.

The metaphorical space that Woolf has constructed provides the narrative with a location for the development of Mr R's thoughts. However, these tunnels have significance beyond the scope of their spatial comportment. Mr R's excursions into the metaphorical spaces of the tunnels have several likenesses to the excursions made by the typical lyrical self of Romantic poetry. Jack Stillinger describes what he names a *flight-and-return* pattern of the Romantic 'I':

Characteristically, the speaker in a Romantic lyric begins in the real world (A), takes off in mental flight to visit the ideal (B), and then – for a variety of reasons, but most often because he finds something wanting in the imagined ideal or because, being a native of the real world, he discovers that he does not or cannot belong permanently to the ideal – returns home to the real (A1). But he has not simply arrived back where he began ..., for he has acquired something – a better understanding of a situation, a change in attitude toward it – from experience of the flight, and he is never again quite the same person who spoke at the beginning of the poem. (Stillinger 3)

Mr R's idea of the ideal pertains to the ideal philosophical genius who can "miraculously, lump all the letters together in one flash" (31). He figures that there is only one such man in a generation, and recognizes that it is not him: 'He had not genius; he laid no claim to that'. Following Stillinger, one could say that he discovers that he is of the real world, and not fit to belong permanently to the ideal. Mr R has had his one spark of genius: "He had made a definite contribution to philosophy in one little book when he was only five and twenty; what came after was more or less amplification, repetition" (23). This is enough for him to experience the ideal, but it is not enough to keep him permanently in the category of genius. He is, as he himself professes, 'a failure' when compared to the ideal genius. Another venture into the ideal happens for Mr R through the allusions to "The Charge of the Light Brigade". He ventures into the ideal world of the hero, where a man dies a heroic death and has 'cairns raised by grateful followers over his bones'. But here also he 'puts his armour off' and returns

to reality and bends his 'magnificent head' and 'does homage' to his wife. His return in this case does not necessarily entail failure. Mr R returns to the image of his wife and son, that is, the image that does in fact belong to reality, as a replacement for the ideal image of the hero. And he does so with a somewhat changed perspective on the problems which he has been concerned with. His return is a return to his wife and family, and to domestic matters that do not concern the hero.

Mr R's flight-and-return into metaphorical space changes his perspective in a similar way as the speaker in a Romantic poem returns from his encounter with the ideal in an altered state. In other words, there is a structural resemblance between Mr R's behaviour and the typical behaviour of a poetic Romantic self. In the previous section I discussed how the word as a minimal structural unit can function as an intersection between several sign-systems. However, the relations between texts are not limited to single words. A text presupposes several categories of narratives; the text is always produced, and finds its place, in a web of other texts. Therefore, the intertextual function also operates on a structural level. A text is not generated by the transcendental idea of literary genres, but by all the other anterior and synchronic texts that are in existence. Woolf's novels are novels by genre, and consequently must bear a minimum of the structural traits which one normally considers a novel to have. But elements from other structural formations can also make an impact on the textual structure of novels. Mr Ramsay's excursions into the ideal bear a structural likeness to Romantic poetry; the structural bearings of one genre, Romantic poetry, are interpolated into the structure of a novel, *To the Lighthouse*.³³

Though the interpolation of romantic structure into *TL* is based on an idea of Romantic poetic structure in general, Mr R's thoughts also have similarities with a specific Romantic poem. The framing action that Mr R performs on his wife and son and how he looks at them from his position by the urn bears similarities to how the lyrical self of "Ode on a Grecian Urn" looks at the humans depicted on the urn: "Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave / Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare; / Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss; ... / yet do not grieve; / She cannot fade ... / Forever wilt thou love and she be fair!" (15-20). The lyrical self of the ode remarks upon the arrangement of two of the human shapes on the urn, a man and a woman lying beneath some trees. The way in which he encourages the young man not to grieve implies a privileged position assigned to the lyrical self. The images

³³ One may argue that the tunnels which are dug out behind Mrs Ramsay are of the same type, and also bear this flight-and-return pattern. However, these do not seem to venture into any form of *ideal*, they merely dig into the memories and visions of Mrs R.

on the urn are forever frozen, and cannot fully grasp their own situation, but the lyrical self can, and is therefore in position to give advice. Cleanth Brooks' canonical reading of the poem stresses the paradoxical element of life as portrayed on the urn: "The beauty portrayed is deathless because it is lifeless" (129). Because of the contrast created by the comparison of the urn to real life, and the melancholy induced by this, the lyrical self in the ode is grieved by his contemplation of it: "Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought" (44). Mr R's framing of Mrs R and James also assigns Mr R a privileged position. The two of them are described as 'children picking up shells' who are 'divinely innocent and occupied with trifles'. Mr R, on the other hand, does not share this innocence. Quite the contrary he sees them as 'somehow entirely defenceless against a doom which he perceived'. He alone can see this doom and is also capable of providing protection against it: 'They needed his protection; he gave it them'. Mr R and the lyrical self of the ode, then, share the idea of themselves as privileged in matters of the head, or knowledge. They know something, and perceive something, that the people they are looking at do not. This is conveyed by the visual representation of, in the former case, Mrs R and James, and in the latter, the couple depicted on the urn. But the feelings which this visual representation creates, differ. The speaker in the poem is grieved by his melancholic contemplation of the images on the urn, Mr R however, is at first consoled by the vision of his wife and child; he is 'fortified and satisfied'. But this consolation is reached by reducing Mrs R and James to 'an illustration', hence an object, perhaps even an object of art. The way he sees them 'together, in the window' seems to suggest a square cut-out of reality, or a framing, which resembles the two-dimensionality of a painting. In order to achieve the privileged position that Mr R takes towards his wife and son, he transforms them into an art object, and they have the same function in his contemplation of reality as the figures on the urn have for the lyrical self of the ode.

The similarities which exist between Mr R and the speaker of a typical Romantic poem can be treated as the interpolation of Romantic structure into the novelistic structure of *TL*. The structural similarities also go beyond the scope of structure in a general sense, and emerge as similarities in motifs and characterization. A third similarity can be found in the arrangement of objects. In Mr R's framing of Mrs R and James where he perceives them as 'an illustration', or something that one sees passing outside a train window, they function as a confirmation of his own line of thought: 'the sight of them fortified him and satisfied him and consecrated his effort to arrive at a perfectly clear understanding of the problem which now engaged his splendid mind'. Though Mrs R and James are spatial objects that are external to

Mr R, the function they are given is a confirmation of his internal concerns. The Mrs R and James who are in fact sitting in the drawing room are separated from the Mrs R and James as framed by Mr R. Similarly to how the 'plateful of blue water' for Mrs R becomes a spatial element which is internal to her memories, Mrs R and James are at the same time external and internal to Mr R's thoughts. This uncertainty as to what sort of object is in fact being described, seems to cause a disturbance in the constitution of space. The focalizer, Mr R, focalizes objects that are external and internal at the same time. This spatial disturbance can be likened to what Charles Schug deems an aspect of Woolf's Romanticism. As noted in my section on spatial characterization, Schug sees a tendency in Woolf towards the Romantic aspiration to conflate consciousness and world, subject and object. The conflation of Mrs R and James, as focalized objects, with the consciousness of Mr R, the subject, can be seen as another Romantic structural element transposed into the novelistic structure of *TL*. However, there is a question of whether the conflation can take place only with a prerequisite separation. After all, Mrs R and James only become a part of Mr R's internal space through a *framing*, a practice that converts them into something other than what they are, something that can function as 'illustration' for Mr R's thoughts.

Mr R's framing of Mrs R and James separates them from themselves. He creates an image of them which fits his state of mind at the moment. When Lily looks at them, she tries to produce a picture of them that is not some sort of copy of them, but that is a tribute to them, while at the same time being them. Both Lily and Mr R duplicate the image of Mrs R and James in some way, and the manner in which they do so has similarities to J. Hillis Miller's idea of how meaning is produced in novels. For Miller, meaning in the novel is generated through recurrences and repetition. His notion of repetition is based on Gilles Deleuze's idea of the simulacrum versus the copy. These two forms of repetition generate meaning through their appearance in novels. Moreover, the two types of repetition often appear as a pair: "In all the novels read here both forms of repetition are in one way or another affirmed as true, though they appear logically to contradict each other" (*FR* 17). The logic of the copy is based on the Platonic Idea; there is one original, and all reproductions stand in a mimetic relation to this original, where the copy always is secondary to the model. This logic is based on the logic of identity, where the copy is made in careful imitation of the model; the copy is regarded as the same as the model, but inferior to it (*FR* 5-6). Mr R's creation of his image of Mrs R and James follows this logic. He creates an image that has lost some of its reality. The image may very well function as consolation for him, but it seems to be secondary to its

original. Perhaps it is not even Mrs R and James that are the originals; perhaps it is the idea of them in Mr R's mind that is the original. In this sense they are a very true copy. Lily's transformation of the pair into an art object follows a different logic. She is looking for that in them which is different from what one regards as *them*, that 'essential thing' which one cannot see when seeing them as mere objects and not art objects. This follows the logic of the simulacrum, or the logic of difference, where the reproduction is not a copy of the model, but is produced under the idea that only that which differs resembles (*FR* 5-6). Only if the reproduction differs from the model is it possible to see the model as it truly is. This logic seems to be immanent also to Roger Fry's idea of the artistic vision as something that lifts the object out of reality and into a state that allows us to see it as it really is. It is not in the similarities to the real object that the excellence of artistic creation comes into being, but in the ability to make the object into something that allows us to see reality from a different perspective. Lily's painting never tries to be an exact reproduction of Mrs R and James. Rather it is a tribute, and an attempt at seeing the 'essential thing'.

According to Miller, both these forms of repetition can be 'affirmed as true' though they seem to contradict each other. Lily's reproduction or Mr R's reproduction of Mrs R on its own would not have any prominent place in the novel. On the contrary, they are given meaning through their position as opposites. The reproductions of Mrs R give each other meaning through being contradictory to each other. Without the comparison of Lily's picture and her framing of Mrs R, Mr R's framing would not seem as important. If his view of his wife was the only perspective the reader was given, it would not have been made out as a problem; it would merely have been a man's view of his wife. With the contrast of Lily's picture, however, the reproduction of Mrs R becomes an event in the novel. It is not simply the description of a person, but an event that accumulates and generates meaning. Or as Miller puts it: "each form of repetition inevitably calls up the other as its shadow companion. You cannot have one without the other, though each subverts the other" (*FR* 16).

To bring attention back to the structural interference of Romanticism in *To the Lighthouse*, I would like to make a last point regarding the question of the narrator. The same framing which Mr R performs of his wife and son can either act as a conflation between subject and object, or as a separation between the thing and the representation of it. This framing incident also entails an interesting duality when it comes to the focalizer/focalized-relationship. Most of the passage functions as pure description of Mr R and his thoughts; all of the words, but one, seem to be seen from his point of view. This one word is 'somehow'

and is the mark of the narrator. 'Somehow' reveals the presence of a perspective in the sentence that does not necessarily coincide with Mr R's. We encounter the sense of reading two things at the same time. Though Mr R's image of his wife and child is not contradicted, for there is no contesting view which is presented, it is definitively deprived of its privileged position, as it becomes relativized by the presence of an additional view: the narrator's. Since Mrs R and James are '*somehow* entirely defenceless' and not merely 'entirely defenceless' it is made clear that the notion of them being entirely defenceless is not an objective account of the matter of things, rather it is Mr R's view of them that makes them thus.

Earlier we have seen how the narrator can be regarded as an almost panspatial and panchronic entity which merges with the characters, and which is often hardly discernible in the narrative. Charles Schug sees this lack of presence as a result of the fusion between the implied author and the narrator. Since the narrator hardly takes up any space in the narrative, the narrating agent is relocated, and the story seems to be told from the point of the implied author (221). Schug goes on to liken this particular Woolfian narrator to the typical persona in Romantic poetry, and on this basis he poses the question whether it is possible to speak of Romantic form as a fictional phenomenon as well as a poetic one. Is it possible that Modern fiction in general, and Woolf's novels in particular, have a structure that complies with Romantic poetic structure? According to Schug "the area in which Romantic form is best to be discerned in fiction, and through which we may best approach it, is that of the more inclusive category under which movement of perspective and point of view are included: narrative mode" (40). The Modern novel and Romantic poetry share the quality of being able to deliver competing claims on the reader's sympathy; they are capable of presenting several truths and of giving several sides to a story. The relocation of the narrative agent to the implied author creates a narrative voice who never emerges as a voice in the sense that it has its origin in the consciousness of a narrating person. It never passes judgement on the characters, but rather creates a space where they can act. The narrator creates a world for the characters in the novel, but then she steps away and "seeks to maintain the fiction that characters exist independently of her" (222). Remarkably Schug compares this reality that the narrator creates with the persona of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn"; the speaker creates a reality for the figures on the urn in the same way Woolf's narrator/implied author provides a world for her characters. Of Romantic personas Schug writes that they "take the raw materials of thought and develop from them poetic motifs; but they also develop the whole design of the work of art rather than simply commenting on it" (221). Though this analogy is appealing,

it is debatable whether it is sound. After all, Woolf's narrator is capable of bending our attention from the single perspective that is given through a focalization (in the Genettian sense). Though it is no doubt that it is from Mr R's perspective that we are seeing things, it is still possible to discern another presence in the narrative. In the ode, the only speaking voice is the 'I', and though the figures on the urn are animated, it is never a question *who* is doing the animating. The urn is always a "bride of quietness" and a "foster-child of silence" (1-2), it does not have a perspective of its own. While the lyrical self in the ode provides us with one singular point of view, the novel allows several. And though the narrator does create a poetic world similarly to the Romantic 'I', it allows for several perspectives, not merely that of the speaking 'I'.

Truth and Beauty

Though I have already stressed how the word 'urn' is central to the imagery of both *TL* and the ode, the existence of one or more single words common to both texts needn't be a sign of intertextual relevance. The urn itself does not become a symbol or reference which points specifically to the ode or its meaning. Rather it opens up a passageway between the texts that allows an understanding based on both texts. I would like to suggest that the system which makes up the ode intersects with *TL* at a point within the narrative that connects it to the Mr Ramsey character. The structural similarities between Mr R's venture into the ideal, and the behaviour of the typical speaker in a Romantic poem, create a connection to Romantic poetry as such. This is a structural connection; nevertheless, it does bring with it a certain amount of meaning. It is not only the structure of "Ode on a Grecian Urn" which plays a defining part in the characterization of Mr R, it is also the poem's meaning as it is appropriated by the novel. The lyrical self of the ode and the position he takes, becomes incorporated in Mr R as focalizer, and the poem's meaning becomes an integrated part of the novel's meaning. In the following section I will explore how these meanings come into play alongside each other, and which consequences it has for the reading of Mr R, as well as the other characters.

If it is so that the sign-system which makes up the ode is interpolated in the sign-system which is the novel, the last lines of the ode: "'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,' – that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know." (49-50) must be significant for our understanding of *TL*. There has been considerable controversy regarding this last couplet's actual meaning, as well as the placement of the quotation marks. T. S. Eliot famously

dismisses these lines as “a serious blemish on a beautiful poem” and “grammatically meaningless” (59). M. H. Abrams and Cleanth Brooks read the couplet as the urn speaking in character, and professing that all is beautiful. The speaker then replies that all may be beautiful in art, but all cannot be beautiful in life (in Stillinger 111). Whether or not it is the urn that is speaking, and who it is speaking to, is also a matter of controversy. It could just as easily be the poet who is speaking, or the figures on the urn.³⁴ Whoever may be speaking, and no matter how many interpretations of the last couplet are possible, it is as a motif that they make their impact on *TL*. Schug writes that “Romantic personas ... take the raw materials of thought and develop from them poetic motifs; but they also develop the whole design of the work of art rather than simply commenting on it” (221). Seeing this statement in the context of intertextuality, one could say that Woolf has taken the raw materials of the ode, the concepts of truth and beauty, and developed them as a new design of a new work of art: *To the Lighthouse*. The first part of this section will be devoted to the concept of truth in *TL*, while the last will focus on beauty.

The question of what is true, or not true, reoccurs throughout *TL*. Several characters continuously return to private deliberation over what the truth of a situation or a person might be. The famous dinner scene presents a condensed version of these reflections on what the truth of a fellow character consists of:

And it was not true, Lily thought; it was one of those misjudgements of [Mrs Ramsay's] that seemed to be instinctive and to arise from some need of her own rather than of other people's. [William Bankes] is not in the least pitiable. He has his work, Lily said to herself.

...

“Do you write many letters, Mr Tansley?” asked Mrs Ramsay, pitying him too, Lily supposed; for that was true of Mrs Ramsay — she pitied men always as if they lacked something — women never, as if they had something.

...

Yes, it was pretty well true, [Charles Tansley] thought. They never got anything worth having from one year's end to another. They did nothing but talk, talk, talk, eat, eat, eat. It was the women's fault. Women made civilisation impossible with all their “charm,” all their silliness.

...

Then why did [Lily] mind what he said? Women can't write, women can't paint — what did that matter coming from him, since clearly it was not true to him but for some reason helpful to him, and that was why he said it? (70-1)

³⁴ Jack Stillinger gives a shortened account of this debate: The entity whose voice is heard in the last couplet could be the urn speaking to the reader, or the poet speaking to either the urn, the figures on the urn, or the reader (114). I suppose it could also be the urn consoling the poet, though Stillinger does not mention this option.

Since the focalizer shifts come close together, and the characters that are being focalized rapidly change within the scope of one focalizer, the personal views of the different characters are displayed in compressed form. Lily Briscoe is perhaps the character who most explicitly searches for the truth of things, for instance she seeks out ‘the essential thing’ in Mrs R’s being. In the extracts above she finds one truth regarding Mrs R in the way she treats men and women differently, and she also recognizes her inclination towards misjudging people to suit her own needs. She finds this same tendency in Charles Tansley; it is ‘for some reason helpful to him’ to make derogatory remarks on women, but these remarks are neither truth as Lily sees it, nor as Tansley himself sees it (in Lily’s eyes at least). What Lily seems to be experiencing here is that each person perceives the truth in his or her own way; Mrs R pities Mr Bankes, though Lily finds nothing pitiable about him; Mr Tansley finds no pleasure in the society of women, though Lily finds this to be a defence mechanism, rather than an opinion based on true feelings; Mrs R also pities Mr Tansley, though Lily finds that this pity is based on Mrs R’s own need to pity, rather than Mr T’s need for pity. The perception of truth seems to change as often as the focalizer or the focalized object.

Lily explores the question of subjective truth; she regularly reflects on what is true of this or that character or situation. The common denominator between these reflections being that that which is true for one may not be true for another. In other words, Lily’s considerations deal with truth as a subjective phenomenon. Though she does seek the truth and ‘the essential thing’, she is always aware that the truths and untruths she sees are a matter of perspective; what is true for Mrs R and for Charles Tansley is not true for Lily.

Though the truth which Lily considers is subjective truth conditioned by perspective, *the truth*, or truth as such, is also given a place in the novel. The characterization of Mr R is from the very beginning laid on the foundation of this character’s association with truth:

What he said was true. It was always true. He was incapable of untruth; never tampered with a fact; never altered a disagreeable word to suit the pleasure or convenience of any mortal being, least of all of his own children, who, sprung from his loins, should be aware from childhood that life is difficult; facts uncompromising; and the passage to that fabled land where our brightest hopes are extinguished, our frail barks founder in darkness (here Mr Ramsay would straighten his back and narrow his little blue eyes upon the horizon), one that needs, above all, courage, truth, and the power to endure. (8)

Mr R seems to be successively associated with truth for the duration of the novel. The repeated references to his mind, his head and his splendid forehead serve as a physical

manifestation of this. In Chapter 6 this occurs through Mrs R's reaction to his negation of the possibility of setting off to sea the following morning: "[t]o pursue truth with such astonishing lack of consideration for other people's feelings" (29). While Mrs R is critical of her husband's quest for truth, after the dinner scene she, to the contrary, praises this quality in her husband: "But it was his way with him, his truthfulness — for instance at dinner she had been thinking quite instinctively, If only he would speak!" (96). Lily Briscoe also observes, with a hint of irony: "the most sincere of men, the truest (here he was), the best" (40). However, this truth is not the subjective truth that Lily finds in the other characters. It is the logical truth of facts and of things that cannot be contradicted. Mr Ramsay's first words in the novel "it won't be fine" (7) are made about the weather the following day. Verification of this statement's truthfulness is possible, the weather will or will not be fine the following day. The verification of Lily's observations, however, is not possible. Is Mr Banks pitiable? The truthfulness of the answer to this question is always conditioned by the perspective of the person answering. The truth in question when Mr R is being characterized, then, is an abstract truth that seems to exist more as a concept. It is the truth which applies to statements which are uncomplicated enough to fit into the narrow categories of logic. He is 'incapable of untruth', he pursues truth, and one of his best and worst qualities is 'truthfulness', yet the content of this truth is seldom explored. It is truth as an abstract concept, and not the singular and subjective truths that Lily finds in her fellow characters.

This abstract concept of truth which Mr R is associated with, though it may not have a particular content, it operates by a certain logic. So what sort of truth is it that Mr R is linked with? One possible answer, I believe, can be found in the metaphor of the alphabet which Woolf has used to describe his manner of thinking. In the section where he is considering his life and work, the nature of his philosophical work is likened to the running through of the alphabet:

if thought is like ... the alphabet is ranged in twenty-six letters all in order, then his splendid mind had no sort of difficulty in running over those letters one by one, firmly and accurately, until it had reached, say, the letter Q. He reached Q. Very few people in the whole of England ever reach Q. ... But after Q? What comes next? ... R is then — what is R? ... He would never reach R. On to R once more. R— (30-31)

Besides the obvious pun on the fact that it is the capital letter of his own name which is the one letter Mr Ramsay cannot reach, using the alphabet as a metaphor seems to imply something about the nature of the truth he is seeking as well. In the preface of the

Wordsworth Edition of *TL*, Nicola Bradbury notes how the alphabet has connotations of childish learning (xi). There is something inherently comical in the image of a philosopher neatly citing the alphabet from A through to Z. The use of the letters R and Q also brings to mind the expression “Mind your P’s and Q’s” as the letter R visually is very similar to P. Again the meaning connoted to the metaphor is something childlike. In this sense the metaphor functions as ridicule of Mr R, and his adherence to truth becomes a laughable matter.

Another aspect of the alphabet metaphor has to do with the nature of the alphabet itself. Rimmon-Kenan describes written language as something that “prescribes a linear figuration of signs and hence a linear presentation of information about things” (45). Mr R follows this linearity in his pursuit of knowledge. He knows that he must get on to R, though he is not sure what R is. The very fact that he is capable of naming R implies that he must have some preconceived idea of what the letter might entail. Logically R must follow Q, and the notion that anything else than R could follow Q would defy the very laws of causality. Within the alphabetic metaphor, his manner of thinking seems to be limited to that which has already been thought; his thinking takes place within a limited scope, corresponding to the limited scope of the alphabet. The truth he is seeking thus becomes a limited truth. According to André Leroi-Gourhan’s account of the history of linear writing, or notation, and its connotations with rational thought and western philosophy, the alphabet is not merely a neutral tool by which thought can be conveyed:

the alphabet is more than just a means of committing to memory the progressive acquisitions of the human mind; it is the tool whereby a mental symbol can be noted in both word and gesture in a single process. ... However, it also entails an impoverishment of the means of nonrational expression. (122)

The mode of linear writing lays down the premises for that which it is possible to conceive as rational thought, or truth, though the alphabet most often is used with the pretention of being neutral, or objective. Leroi-Gourhan emphasizes that alternatives to this mode do exist, like the more pictographic mode of Chinese notation or the ancient hieroglyphs, though we tend to accept linear notation as a given. So truth, when expressed by the alphabetic metaphor, can be seen not only as limited by a preconceived idea of what it entails, but also as a truth that is governed by a concept of rationality which reduces its claim on universality, as it is conveyed in a manner that is not neutral or objective. Seen in this light, the statement that what Mr R

says is 'always true' seems to lose some of its universal claim, because the truth he is linked to is a truth that is a reduced truth, a biased truth, or perhaps not a truth at all.

The association of Mr R to a certain form of truth, and of Mrs R with a certain form of beauty, links the novel to the ode. The idea of the art object also figures in both the poem and the novel. Though "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is first and foremost an apostrophe, it is ekphrasis that dominates it, and it is also ekphrasis that serves as starting point for the lyrical self's consideration of the nature of art, truth and beauty. The speaker describes the markings on the urn and continuously compares it to reality: "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard / Are sweeter ... And, happy melodist, unwearied, / For ever piping songs for ever new" (11-2, 23-4). The speaker puts all the melancholy of the comparison of reality to art and the realization of reality's transitory nature, set in contrast to the everlasting deadness of art, into the description of the urn. The urn in *TL*, however, is hardly described at all, and the ekphratic element is barely present. The only description of the urn is of its ram's horn for a handle and that it holds geraniums. At first glance it may seem to be more like a peripheral prop, than an item central to the imagery. There is, however, an element of ekphrasis in the passages where the urn appears, but not in relation to the urn itself, rather of the images it produces for Mr R. Mr R reduces Mrs R and James to objects of art and assigns himself a privileged position. He can see what they cannot; in the same way as the lyrical self of the ode can see beyond the scope of the urn, as opposed to that which the figures on the urn are capable of perceiving. The metaphorical page, and the illustration on it, that Mr R sees, functions in the same way as the urn does to the speaker of the ode. The description of the urn produces a melancholy in the speaker of the poem, and the description of the image of James and Mrs R, as focalized by Mr R, for him produces a feeling of 'doom'. The feelings which are produced in him follow the ekphratic image of his wife and child, as does the speaker's melancholy follow the ekphratic image of the urn.

The incorporation of the ode into the Mr R character entails a transformation of Mrs R and James into an art object. Though this transformation does not necessarily define the Mrs Ramsay character as such (if such a thing exists), it does have significance for understanding her importance for Mr R. I have mentioned Lily's effort to capture Mrs R in her painting, and that she does not attempt to create a lifelike representation of her. For Lily the search for the essence of Mrs R's beauty becomes an exploration of the very nature of art, representation and beauty. For Mr R the transformation plays a different part. When Mr R perceives his wife as a work of art, the association of Mrs R to beauty seems to expand metonymically into the

ode. The first lines of Keats' poem "Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness / Thou foster-child of silence and slow time", describes the urn as both feminine and silent. Mrs R is both 'silent always', and perceived as beautiful, Greek, and an object of art. This certainly suggests an association of her and the feminine urn described in the poem. The urn in the poem, though it is there in the vicinity of the speaker, it is distant; it is the 'foster-child of silence' and a 'bride of quietness', it does not speak and cannot tell its own story. To Mr R, Mrs R also seems distant:

he could not help noting, as he passed, the sternness at the heart of her beauty. It saddened him, and her remoteness pained him, and he felt, as he passed, that he could not protect her, and, when he reached the hedge, he was sad. He could do nothing to help her. He must stand by and watch her. Indeed, the infernal truth was, he made things worse for her. (54)

To Mr R the beauty of Mrs R seems stern. Similarly to the speaker of the ode, he cannot access the secret which she seems to hide. She is remote and he cannot do anything to help her. As opposed to the effect of the image of Mrs R and James together, which consoles Mr R, this image of her alone is disconcerting to him, similarly to the speaker's melancholic response to the urn. However, both of these images which Mr R creates have the effect of altering his feelings there and then; they both function as incentives to a certain sentiment. Mrs R, as a focalized object by Mr R as focalizer, is always important to his state of mind, or perhaps state of feeling. When he looks at her, it is almost as if she is an extension of him, and not her own being.

Mrs R's status as representation, and as an art object, seems to be closely interlocked with her death in the novel. The passage I have cited earlier, where Mr R returns from musing on his fame and possible posthumous glory, concludes with Mr R 'bending his magnificent head before [Mrs Ramsay] — who will blame him if he does homage to the beauty of the world?'. Mr Charmichael repeats the gesture towards the end of the dinner scene: "and as she passed him he turned slightly towards her repeating the last words: / Luriana, Lurilee, / and bowed to her as if he did homage" (90). Though it is obvious that this homage is made to Mrs R, since Mr R bends his head before her, it is also done to beauty. Both men bow their heads to Mrs R and to beauty. Lily Briscoe, however, is attempting to create a tribute to Mrs R by finding the essence of her beauty. Though 'homage' and 'tribute' are practically synonyms (Webster) the meanings Woolf has assigned to them appear to be different. While they both are associated with the problem of Mrs R's beauty, they come to differ in meaning by their

usage. The tribute which Lily aims at creating cannot be finished until the object it is a tribute to, is no longer there. Because her beauty is deceptive, and the truth of her being subjective, the painting that is meant to be a tribute cannot be finished until she is gone. Mr R, on the other hand, manages to do homage to his wife, but it is on the condition that he has made her into either an extension of himself, or a representation of herself. The truth of her beauty is not to be found in looking. As a living person she cannot be understood fully by the gaze that looks upon her, however scrutinizing it may be.

The details of Mrs R's death are not revealed in the narrative. The only account given of it is the reaction Mr R has to it. The two bracketed sentences in "Time Passes" read: "[Mr Ramsay stumbling along a passage stretched his arms out one dark morning, but Mrs Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before he stretched his arms out. They remained empty.]" (105) Here again it is as if the narrative treats Mrs R as an object. Mr R stretches his arms out, an action performed in space, but he does not find anything to embrace, because she is no longer there. Her death, and her absence³⁵, is described by her not being where Mr R trusts her to be. She, understood as a spatial element, is not there anymore. The narrative account of her death is done through her absence from narrative space; instead of a detailed description of Mrs R's deathbed, Woolf shows us the empty space she used to fill. The image of Mr R 'stumbling along a passage' also gives a spatial image of his bewildered state after her death, an image which is further developed in "The Lighthouse".

Mrs R's status as an artistic representation for Mr R has consequences for his reaction to her death. If it is so that the ode is interpolated into *TL* at a point that connects to Mr R, and that the lyrical self of the poem, because of this interpolation, becomes an integrated part of this character, then Mrs R's association with the urn must necessarily be affected by the positing of it outside time. According to Brooks, the men and women depicted on the urn "will not age as flesh-and-blood men and women will The marble men and women lie outside time. The urn which they adorn will remain. The 'Sylvan historian' will recite its history to other generations" (134-5). The lines of the ode that inspire this reading are found in the last stanza: "When old age shall this generation waste, / Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe" (46-7). Mr R's view of his wife links her to something immortal, something that

³⁵ Gillian Beer notes how Woolf's fiction is dependent on the idea of absence: "Several of Virginia Woolf's books compose themselves about an absence: ... Mrs Ramsay's in the second half of *To the Lighthouse* ... Absence is given predominance to memory and to imagination. ... In one sense, everything is absent in fiction, since nothing can be physically there." (CG 29)

will not perish with time. Though she does, which might explain his desolation in the last part of the novel; his need for sympathy that seems to be all that is left of him.

Lily's tribute cannot be finished until Mrs R is no longer there, perhaps because the essence of her beauty cannot be recovered before she herself has become finite. For how is it possible to find the essence of an unfinished object? Mrs R's death is brought to us as bracketed information at the end of the third chapter of the middle part "Time Passes", a chapter which describes the first step towards the ruin of the summer house coming in the shape of an autumn storm:

But alas, divine goodness, twitching the chord, draws the curtain; he covers his treasures in a drench of hail, and so breaks them, so confuses them that it seems impossible that their calm should ever return or that we should ever compose from their fragments a perfect whole or read in the littered pieces the clear words of truth.

...

[Mr Ramsay stumbling along a passage stretched his arms out one dark morning, but Mrs Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before he stretched his arms out. They remained empty.] (105)

TP is distinguished from the other two parts of the novel by being very descriptive and paying special attention to the visual surroundings of the summer house. Information on the characters, as that of Mrs R's death, only appears in brackets most often at the end of selected chapters. Ellen Tremper reads all of TP as a metaphor for Lily's struggle to become an artist: "Woolf puts the procreative woman to rest and announces the emergence into consciousness of the woman-artist. ... 'Time Passes' has served as the figural representation of the struggle to achieve such an art" (174). As far as Lily's progression as an artist, I do agree, however, I find the death of Mrs R significant beyond her being dispelled from the story because she is an image of the wife and mother. Her death also brings with it what seems to be a reflection over artistic creation. The use of the word 'compose' in the quotation above and the notion of arranging the fragments of nature into a 'perfect whole' sends one's thoughts to the creation of art. Schug writes that "we must think of Romantic form as a unified whole" (20), and as I have mentioned above, the Romantic personae can 'develop the whole design of the work of art'. The narrative in this passage invokes the Romantic notion of the 'perfect whole' just sentences before it sends Mrs R to her death. And though it does enable Lily's progression as an artist, it is not simply because Lily is also a woman, and needs to negate the possibility of being a wife and a mother. It is because she has not been able to see beyond her beauty. Or as Lily herself puts it towards the end of the novel:

But beauty was not everything. Beauty had its penalty — it came too readily, came too completely. It stilled life — froze it. One forgot the little agitations; the flush, the pallor, some queer distortion, some light or shadow, which made the face unrecognizable for a moment and yet added a quality one saw for ever after. It was simpler to smooth that all out under the cover of beauty. (146)

And though Lily does complete her painting and has her ‘vision’, perhaps she does find the essence of Mrs R, but since we are reading a book and not viewing a painting, we never see it, and the essence is never revealed.

Chapter Summary

Intersections between texts have been the basis for this chapter. The urn which figures in *The Waves*, *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* functions as an intersection with Keats’ poem “Ode on a Grecian Urn”. The poem has a similar vocabulary with *W*, while it is its structure, as well as the occurrences of similar themes, which make up the most prominent likenesses with *TL*. There are also similar literary techniques in the poem and in the novels.

The intersection between the ode and *TL* happens at a point in the narrative which connects it specifically to the character Mr Ramsay. His mental actions and the tunnels into his thoughts have similar form to that of a typical lyrical self of a Romantic poem. His framing of his wife and child, and conversion of them into an art object, also resembles the view the lyrical self of the ode has of the urn as an object of art. However, the presence of a narrator makes the novel’s structure more complex than the poem.

The famous last couplet of Keats’ poem can be regarded as the basis for a reading of *TL*. The connection of Mrs R to the concept of beauty and Mr R to the concept of truth places them in a unique position when it comes to finding meaning in the novel. Lily Briscoe’s development of her artistic gaze allows her to deal with both the concept of truth and beauty in relation to the completion of her painting.

Chapter Four: Thesis Summary

The aim of this text has been the exploration of literary space in Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse*. An exploration of space calls for a system of concepts that has the ability to render the nuances of literary space on the level of the narrative world, as well as space understood in a more abstract sense. Chapter One was an Introduction to my field of investigation, as well as an examination of how literary space can be conceptualized. The two main theoretical approaches to the novel have been through narratology and intertextuality.

The field of narratology, and critical theory as such, favours the concept of narrative time over space. There are not many narratological terms that pertain to the analysis of space. The terms that are in use are few and inapt. The reason for this may perhaps be that the concept of narrative space seems to rest on the image of space as something which is created in the mind of reader. The analysis of a reader's mind may easily be considered a subjective enterprise, and is therefore not suitable for the field of narratology. Yet, there are some terms which are possible to apply in a manner which allows for an attentiveness to the visual space of a narrative text, without them being subjective.

My first narratological method of approach to the novel was through the concept of the space/time duality. The contrasts between the three different parts of the novel consist largely of differences in the narrative attention to space and time. The middle part, "Time Passes", covers a long period of time, while external space dominates the narrative. The passage of time is portrayed by spatial elements in this part, such as the details of the decaying summer house. This turns the passage of time into a spatial matter. Conversely, the first and last part, "The Window" and "The Lighthouse", cover a short period of time, and the characters' internal spaces are dominating. The dominance of internal space creates a lack of fixed points in external space. The lack of fixed points generates an imaginary world which is transparent.

The visual structure of TW and L is dominated by the characters' internal space (thoughts and feelings), and that which has been named Woolf's tunnelling process. The term *focalization*, coined by Gérard Genette, has served the purpose of describing how the narrative often focuses on one character. It also describes the narrative alterations between various *focal characters*, or the way the narrative shifts its visual and metaphorical focus from centring on one character to another. I have chosen to use this term in as literal a sense as possible. This means that the *visual* qualities of narrative space have been given attention. The

focal characters I have dealt with are primarily Mr Ramsay and Lily Briscoe, though Mrs Ramsay has also been given some space.

Rimmon-Kenan's use of the concept of focalization has served a different purpose. Since the terms *focalizer* and *focalized object* are functions which are given to elements within the narrative world, they have served to show how the world of *TL* is dependent on a certain amount of objects that the narrative swerves between. The terms have also served to show how characters focalize each other. This term I have also used in a literal sense, that is, it has been the idea of what characters can in fact see which has been the centre of attention. The focalized objects I have concentrated on are the reddish-brown stocking, the stone urn and Lily's painting. Mrs R also functions as a focalized object for both Mr R and Lily. The focalizing character may focalize objects in external space, and in their own internal space. The ambiguity concerning objects placement in internal or external space, creates a narrative space which hardly ever is left uncoloured by the characters' consciousnesses.

The construction of the characters' internal spaces also becomes a mode of characterization. The characters focalize their own internal space, that is, their memories of people or objects. Consequently, the narrative creates a space where the characters' thoughts and feelings are developed. When conceptualizing the novel in terms of space, and not in terms of narrative voice, questions of the narrator's position occur. Several critics regard the narrator as merged with the characters, or otherwise dependent on them. The comparison of the narrator in *TL* to the narrative function in *The Waves* shows that there is a structuring principle in *TL* which is more comprehensible than in *W*. However, approaching the narrative in terms of space, shows that there seems to be no *discourse space*, that is, no space that is the narrator's own. It is difficult to regard the narrator as a spatial component.

Pertaining to spatial elements, it is the window and the lighthouse which are the most prominent *structural key elements* of the novel. The window functions as a centre point for the narrative in the first part, while the lighthouse structures the last part. The reddish-brown stocking, the stone urn and Lily's painting also play a significant structural part in the narrative. These three objects occur at the opening of the *tunnels* which are dug out behind the characters. The reddish-brown stocking functions as a tunnel opener for Mrs R. The urn on the terrace has a similar function for Mr R. However, the urn on the terrace also appears in several of Woolf's novels, and therefore seems to have a function in addition to being a tunnel opener. Lily's painting structures the narrative by being a centre for ideas pertaining to art. The painting prompts Mr Banks' and Lily's discussion of the nature of art, a discussion

which brings to light a fictionalized version of contemporary views on aesthetics. The picture is also a *framing* of Mrs R; it is an attempt at transforming her into art. It functions as a contrast to Mr R's framing of Mrs R. The two framing incidents act as opposites to each other, and through the opposition the framings are given their importance.

My second approach to a spatial reading of *TL* has been through the concept of intertextuality. I have tried to adhere to a notion of intertextuality which does not reduce it to influence. A spatial reading of intertextuality entails an understanding of the intertextual function as something which happens *between* texts. The aspects of intertextuality which I have given the most attention are the idea of the *ambivalent word*, and the idea of *structural intersections* between texts.

The ambivalent word 'urn' creates an intersection which connects Keats' poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn" with *TL* and *W*. The occurrence of the stone urn in *W* is accompanied by several other of the words that figure in the poem. However, the poem does not seem to make an impact on the novel as a whole. It rather functions as a poetic interplay of common vocabulary. In *TL* the poem seems to have a greater structural impact. The intersection created between *TL* and the ode connects it to the Mr Ramsay character. The urn as object functions as a tunnel opener for him. The narrative treatment of his view of his wife and child also has similarities with the view the lyrical self of the poem has of the figures on the urn.

The notion of a structural intersection between *TL* and the structure of Romantic poems also plays a part in the characterization of Mr R. His venture into the cave behind him follows the *flight-and-return* pattern of a typical Romantic poem. Tennyson's poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade" also figures in these tunnels. The connection of the space of Tennyson's poem and Mr R's internal space is an incident of how the visuality of one text can be interpolated into another. The Romantic idea of the conflation between consciousness and world has also been considered for its spatial qualities. Several critics have dealt with Woolf's Romanticism both on the level of structure and on the level of content.

The last couplet of Keats' poem has functioned as a central metaphor for my reading of *TL*. Truth and Beauty, as concepts, are both thoroughly thematized in the novel. Mrs R is successively linked to the concept of beauty. Important topics in this context are how the different types of beauty function, if there exists anything that is essentially beautiful, and how the concept of beauty is present in art. Mr R is linked to a version of the concept of truth. Truth basically exists in two forms in *TL*: First, as an idea of an abstract universal truth, and second, the idea of the subjective truth of human interaction. Mr R is linked to the former,

while Lily Briscoe considers the latter. Lily's position as an artist gives her room to deliberate over the concepts of truth and beauty as well. Lily's work as an artist brings the themes dealt with in the novel to a close when she finishes her painting at the end.

Appendix

Ode on a Grecian Urn

I

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunt about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter: therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal – yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

III

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,

And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

V

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,' – that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know

John Keats

The Charge of the Light Brigade

I

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
'Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!' he said;
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
Was there a man dismayed?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Someone had blundered:
Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
 Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
 Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flashed all their sabres bare,
Flashed as they turned in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
 All the world wondered:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reeled from the sabre stroke
 Shattered and sundered.
Then they rode back, but not
 Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
 Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
 Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
 All the world wondered.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
 Noble six hundred!

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

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